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The Relevance of Local Context to the Global
Phenomenon of Early Childhood Education:
Case study of the Northern Region of Ghana.

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the
Requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in Education

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List of Abbreviations

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AU	African Union
CPC	Chicago Child-Parent Centres
DAP	Developmentally Appropriate Practice
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education for All
EPPE	Effective Provision of Preschool Education
GCC	Ghana Children's Commission
GECE	Gukpegu Early Childhood Experimental
GES	Ghana Education Service
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
GOG	Government of Ghana
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JHS	Junior High School
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOWAC	Ministry of Women and Children
NECE	Naaya Early Childhood Experimental
PPP	High Scope Perry Preschool Project
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
RQ	Research Question
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SHS	Senior High School
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
TLMs	Teaching and Learning Materials
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WB	World Bank
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
GTZ	German Organisation for Technical Cooperation
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
WAEC	West African Examinations Council
WASSCE	West African Senior School Certificate Examinations
W H O	World Health Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
TLMs	Teaching and Learning Materials

Declaration

The work in this thesis was developed and conducted by me between January 2013 and April 2017.

I declare that, apart from work whose authors are explicitly acknowledged, this thesis and the materials contained in this thesis represent original work undertaken solely by me. I confirm that this thesis has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

Anyars Imoro Ibrahim

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In the name of Allah the Beneficent the Merciful...'Read in the name of your Lord who creates...who teaches man by the pen. He who teaches man that which he knows not' (Qur'an 96:1-5). Thanks be to Allah for this accomplishment and His Favour.

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Abstract

Early childhood care and development (ECCD) as a global phenomenon has become integral to the Ghanaian educational system: especially since the 2004 Policy. Global meanings attached to ECCD programmes while characteristically dependent on Western notions of childhood and child rearing have dominated the terrain of early childhood education. As a result, local exemplars show increasing isomorphism with the templates from the developed world; albeit incongruously in certain instances in the Ghanaian case. This study applied a mixed methods approach through a case study methodology: using a survey (preceding case selection), interviews, observations, focus groups, and documents. Mainly, the research entail perceptions of 49 local stakeholders: children, parents, teaching staff, and key stakeholder informants; in a multiple case study set within the Northern Region of Ghana.

The case study revealed crucial issues that border on contextual relevance of global ECCD and local incapacity to contextualise the phenomenon within Ghana's socio-cultural and historical realities. Moreover, entrenched developing world dependency on the developed world effectively stultified such contextual provision. Therefore, the Ghanaian case study exemplified capitulation to influences from the developed world: resulting in disjunctions at the realms of policy, provision and practice. A clear instantiation of this is the unravelled ambivalent positions that characterised stakeholder attitudes and perceptions: often insinuating both congruence and divergence on the Global–Local ECCD scene. While they perceived excessive dependence on imported global educational practices; they equally articulated divergently stances antithetical to the incorporation of the local culture and lived realities of children. Significantly, many questions remain and call for future research: in particular the effects of ECCD as conceived in the Ghanaian context on the future schooling trajectories of children.

Chapter One

1.0 Introduction

In the wake of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, various nations now default to a visible – almost global – accountability framework for children and childhoods. In part, this was envisioned from the collective global promise to transform the world and its populations; with emphasis on the vulnerable (UN 2000). Earlier movement signalled future attitudes to childhood entailed in the World Summit for Children in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 and subsequently the Dakar Framework on Education for All 2000. This in sum was the world's attempt at a global governance of education: with specific reference to a certain prominence for the expansion of early childhood care and education (as Goal 1 of the global framework). In its response to such global movements, the government of Ghana enacted an early childhood care and development (ECCD) policy in 2004.

Although the policy took a long gestation period (from 1993) to be realised, its inception has eventually defined the character of existing provision and practice, in the country. In stature, it has achieved an acclaim as the first attempt at incorporating the early years into mainstream compulsory basic education. By its material character, however, Ghana's ECCD policy, provision and practice appear to show extreme variance, in its ardent conformity to a standardised global template. The ECCD policy as conceived in the Ghanaian case exhibits copiously imitations and heavy borrowing from global trends that are rooted in Western tradition and culture. From the outset therefore, dissensions are apparent on the questionable leanings of current policy to the local context. In other words, the test of contextual or cultural appropriateness appear wanting. The perceived contrasts with Ghana's existing socio-cultural realities, due to wholesale adoption of external ideas, increasingly effuse disjunctions between global ECCD and the local context.

This doctoral research study was conceived to study ECCD in the way that the global plays out on the local. From the emergent research questions, the case study emerged as a suited methodology for this study: to seek clarity in the boundaries between the global phenomenon of ECCD and local praxis. Later substantive chapters offer depth of explications of the interplay of the global and the local; as well as the purported incongruities and areas of convergence that present on the ECCD landscape in Ghana.

This chapter of the thesis aims to introduce the relevant areas of contention as well as offer a lay out of how the entirety of the thesis has been constructed. Crucially, this introductory chapter deals with the contextual realities that highlight the areas of incongruity between the global ECCD phenomenon and the local Ghanaian approach to practice; as well as the possibilities for convergence. As a result, this and the later contextual chapter (Chapter Four) attempt to set in context education, and ECCD for that matter, in Ghana: in terms of slices of the global in the local.

1.1 Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)

By whatever terms early childhood care and development may be defined or conceptualised, in reality childhood remains both cultural and context dependent. In consideration of the participative and communitarian character of Ghanaian society, this study incrementally adopts stances that align with the social constructionist conceptualisation of childhood. By this, it is the case essentially that biological determinism is not exclusively sufficient to explicate childhood. Hence, global preferences for a particular childhood – with sometimes developmentalist leanings – create a disjuncture with and within local realities. Therefore, a developmentalist worldview incessantly stutters within cultures that are non-Western in character; such as the developing world context of Northern Ghana. Childhood by these understandings then is significantly a function of time – the socio-cultural histories along with the contemporaneous; and place – the diverse communities and vagaries of contexts. To this end, the all-too familiar constructions of individualistic right-based notions (with colossal resonance with Western cultures) based on Rousseauian, Lockean and Piagetian constructs appear heavily contested; in juxtaposition to non-Western traditionally collectivistic and communitarian societies (Nyarko 2014; Pound 2011).

In undertaking this doctoral study therefore, clear awareness and considered reasoning of such nuances were paramount. Such awareness imply that the research by its inclination, is to highlight such stark positions across the globe, in the ways that early childhood is understood. Second, (and this is more fundamental to the research) the pervasive agenda to promote a particular univocal worldview of childhood is critically an affront to the polyphonic character of childhoods. The research questions (RQs) that guided this doctoral research have sought to illuminate these contentions. With a strong and fundamental claim that: on childhood an abandonment of culture and context germane to the sociogenic origins of children, ultimately result in significant

disjunctions in the practice of ECCD. Still, the perceptions of stakeholders, and the very character of the global–local dynamics of ECCD have highlighted many areas where the local contextual issues show convergence with the global precepts implicated as triggers of these disjunctions.

1.1.1 Definitions of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)

To define early childhood, attention naturally focusses on childhood first. The definition of childhood itself is contentious: mainly, considerations go along the trajectory of biological determinism or social constructionism. While the developmental chronology of children entails behaviours and needs perceived biologically as facts of nature; the meanings and understandings arising out of the agential utility of such biological features remain essentially socio-cultural phenomenon (Prout & James 2015: 6). This is widely regarded as the new paradigm – the sociological studies of childhood: striking on its attempt to disengage childhood constructions solely on functionality to a preference for meaning (Crick 1976 cited in James & Prout 2015: 7). Childhood therefore, provides ‘an interpretive frame for contextualising the early years of human life’ (ibid). Inherently embedded in this definition of childhood is the chronological and staged development – of which the early years are simply a part. These contentions are suggestive of universality – in the wide acceptance of biological immaturity as a fact; and conversely on diversity as childhood are not consigned to a fixed conception. It is issues such as these that call for conceptions of childhood and early childhood in terms tempered by the prevailing culture, society, context and circumstances.

As far as early childhood – as defined in global terms – the understandings highlight this stage as both a crucial and a critical life phase in human development. Popularised as the ages covering birth to eight (0–8 years), early childhood naturally plays into the institutionalised social structure that suggest that children ought to be socialised (in a particular frame) into adulthood. The growing global prominence to early childhood ran equally on the assumption that this is a stage suited for conscription into schooling. There is an increasing significance of equating brain research to provision for a critical phase of childhood; along with the UN’s assertion that ‘learning begins from birth’ (UNESCO 2003). Such positioning simplifies complexities heralded by the various conceptualisations of childhood and what issues are essential. Equally, with a predominantly Western conception of childhood, attempts to govern education and childhoods globally have been deemed problematic. In the view of this doctoral study, while some commonalities prevail

among the global and the local on education, and early childhood for that matter; it is apparent that tendencies to universalise and export such Westernised conceptions evidence multiple negativities. Such issues present in the disadvantages, disequilibrium, and disjunctions that emanate as a result of such hegemonic attitudes. In the conduct of this research, both the theoretical and empirical data have pointed to these areas of congruence as well as the points of disjunction.

The foregoing conglomeration of issues and contentions lead UNESCO to characterise early childhood care and education as:

The period from birth to eight years old. A time of remarkable brain growth, these years lay the basis for subsequent development. Early childhood care and education (ECCE) is more than a preparatory stage assisting the child's transition to formal schooling. It places emphasis on developing the whole child – attending to his or her social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs – to establish a solid and broad foundation for lifelong learning and wellbeing. (UNESCO 2000)

With the emphasis on certain elements, as above, the Ghanaian attempt to formulate policy and subsequent practice have heavily internalised these global ideals. This study unpacks these ideals that have assumed acclaim as a global template. Such a global conceptualisation has entailed the following: birth to eight as symbolising early childhood; emphasis of the critical nature based on brain research; readiness, transition and preparatory rationales; holistic development framework; and rationales based on future outcomes. Globally, therefore, the success of early childhood education programmes is predicated upon the capacity to affect these elements in policy, provision and practice.

1.1.2 The Child in Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)

The child is the main protagonist of this research work, and as a result deserves appropriate positioning. The discourse on early childhood, across the realms of the modern and postmodern, have foreseen various constructions and reconstructions. In essence though, the now widely and popularly accepted stance is that childhood varies in accord with culture and context. To that extent, constructs have evolved depicting the child as: an identity and knowledge producer (Locke),

as innocent (Rousseau), as biologically determined (Piaget), as an aid to production, among others (Pound 2011; Dahlberg 2007).

As this study is largely about early childhood education, the fundamental emphasis of these constructs relies on the position that the child (and early childhood as defined from birth to age eight) is an embodiment of multiple identities. A critical part of these being the assumptions that early childhood is a zone and exclusive preserve for the rearing and upbringing of the child. Such assumption necessarily entails an inherent caveat which while adult-determined still posits the child as the agent with a futuristic predetermined goal. The child in early childhood – primordially – is on a trajectory as a learner, a responsible member of a community, and crucially as bearer of the burden of a future labour market with productive citizenry aspirations. This is significant, as a subscription to these constructions of childhood imply ‘progressing from simplicity to complexity, from irrational to rational behaviour, from a stage of biological immaturity, passing through a developmental process and moving into a fully developed human status as adult’ (Christensen & Prout 2005:48). These constructs essentially define and inform the internationally popularised notions of developing the ‘whole child’ and holistic child development: cognitively, socially, emotionally, as well as health, hygiene and nutrition (UNESCO 2007). Ostensibly, these notions are not without contest: the abiding obsession with a developmentally deterministic view of childhood reductively ascribes children to futuristic missions (of ‘becoming’); almost mortgaging the present (of ‘being’) to the future through a riddle of readiness (Janzen 2008; Halpern 2013).

Locally, various countries have applied varied understandings in their ECCD programmes: choices on how to account for children within their national domain. Regardless of how the choice was arrived at, in the Ghanaian case, this study perceives an overly dominant notion of a particular child. These have significantly emerged through Western constructs of childhood that have come to be accepted as global understandings of who the child is. As a consequence, nations in the majority world have been left with very little option than to import and mimic the global template. Almost a ‘dictatorship of no alternatives’ (Unger 2005: 1): with unquestioned need for policy provision and practice of ECCD as it relates to culture and context. This view directly implicates, at once, developed nations in the schooling trajectories of children in the developing world, such as Ghana. This is a stance assumed within this research in the broad examination of the practice of ECCD in Ghana (as reflected in the main research question). This doctoral research, therefore, raises critically the issues that come to the fore when developing nations apply – in disregard of

their culture and contexts – existing models and templates of ECCD from the West. Through the application of an interpretivist case study, the study at first hand sought to clarify the unclear boundaries in the interplay between the global phenomenon of ECCD and the contexts of practice, such as the Northern Region of Ghana.

1.1.3 Global Meanings and Contexts

Early childhood care and development (ECCD), as Ghana has chosen to conceptualise the early childhood education programme locally, by its very existence reflects the global on the local. Globally, ECCD is conceived as the programme that believes in the immense potentiality of children and childhood, starting from birth. This is significant, and denotes the definition given to ECCD internationally. The UN agencies among them the UNESCO and the UNICEF define the period of birth (age 0) to the age of eight (8) as constituting the early childhood phase. Globally too, early childhood is deemed as both crucial and a critical phase of life: with tropes often exaggerating its critical transient nature. Some commentators (Waldfoegel 2008: 583) lament the irrationality of a ‘use it or lose it’ tendency conveyed in such attitudes to ECCD. Global movements conveyed in ‘We the Children’ and ‘A World Fit for Children’ raised the stakes based on equations among the brain, the child and economic development (UNICEF 2001; 2002). Suffice it to state that, in its entirety, global ECCD aims at developing the whole child: explained to mean clear emphasis and attendance to the social, emotional, cognitive, spiritual and physical needs of the child (UNESCO 2007).

While well-intentioned, the character of global ECCD in practice has evinced a Western dominance; at the crucial levels of theory, conceptualisation and to an extent practice. There is no denying an undercurrent to produce a particular child and childhood. A tendency that forges an antithetical positioning between global ECCD when put in practice in local contexts. Such an agenda not only narrows potential diversity of childhoods and praxes across the globe but also actively produces hegemonies in ECCD. Pence and Hix-Small (2009: 1) highlight how adversarial and counter-productive ‘limited images and research methods’ can be ‘to the roots of international ECCD that are based in culture, context and diversity’. These views by no means are not universally unchallenged: there are variant explications across various disciplines. Among them the critiques of developmentalist views on childhood (MacNaughton 2005; Dahlberg et al. 2007 & 2013) along with the poststructuralist conceptions; the advent of a sociological alternative to the

constructions and reconstructions of childhood (James & Prout 2015; Qvortrup et al. 2011; Jenks; 2005; James, Jenks & Prout 1998); the post-colonial critical positions (Mazrui 1987, Amin 1988, Viruru 2001, Nsamenang & Pence 2008); the globalisation explications (Andersen-Levitt 2010; Gibson-Graham 2003; Penn 2009); and lastly, advocates for the harnessing and appropriation of constructions to context and culture (Woodhead et al 1998; Woodhead & Montgomery 2003; Dahlberg et al 2013; Pence & Hix-Small 2007 & 2009; Nsamenang 2008; Twum-Danso & Ame 2012).

The foregoing renders a contested portrait of the ECCD landscape. A historically grounded and constructed worldview of childhood in minority world contexts, on the one hand. On the other hand, is the almost obsessive zeal to export to other contexts deemed bereft of such privileged knowledges – mostly in the majority world (Penn 2001). The eventual expectations are that majority world contexts will receptively adopt these practices to effect homogeneity with the global. In undertaking this doctoral thesis, the motivation was to catch a glimpse of the global in practice at the local. Essentially, what is revealed is the almost uncontested reign of a global template in contexts farther from the privileges of Western provision. In the end, developing nations like Ghana without question, have skipped such contextual considerations in the local policy and provision of ECCD. Thus, adopting pre-existing essentialized global models. As a consequence, what emerged from the case study of two early childhood settings in the Northern Region of Ghana depicted miniature and mimicked versions from the West. The emergent contentions in the local settings merely manifest a natural conflict between the global ECCD phenomenon and the local practice, without regard to context.

1.1.4 Early Childhood on the World Stage – Global and Local Exemplars

Early childhood according to Viruru (2001) is couched in a lingua of such affluence farther away from the reach of developing nations. To that extent the acclaimed global ECCD sold internationally as the panacea to childhood inequalities and disadvantage ought to be tempered with local cultural and contextual appropriateness. Helen Penn (2001: 292) critiques the half-baked constructions that popularly highlight generalised, essentialized and universalised childhood conceptions; often without due cognisance of the ‘catalogue of suffering’ inherent within the lived realities of majority world children. Other commentators (Pence & Hix-Small 2009) cite an imbalance and the impropriety of applying research from a minority context (of 10 percent of the

world's children) to a majority (of 90 percent). Critically however, most research and knowledges on ECCD emanate from the developed world (minority world): essentially coalesced into a legion of truth, deemed worthy of export to other contexts (Clay 1998; Raban 2001; Penn 2010). The developing world (home to Majority of the world's children) being the most pliant in its perpetuation, due to pre-existing colonising structures: resonance with the oft-cited and continuing donor–recipient relationship. It is a view shared in this research that, to the extent that local contexts suffer an obfuscation of their potentialities to eke out appropriate local ECCD practice; what results would entail significant disjunctions that neither satisfy the local nor the global. This view finds ample explication in the various strands and narrative of this thesis.

In the main, it is the reality that children – as childhoods – vary in relation to time and place. There is a certain childhood familiar to a Ghanaian and for that matter the African child: with associations to a ‘catalogue of suffering’ (Penn 2001) and ‘trauma’ (interviewee – Proprietor 1). Also, a childhood not based on strict chronology of age; but typologies of mixed age peers. As well as intergenerational shared responsibilities; with commonality of goals converging at the societal or community level. Pence & Nsamenang (2008: 37–39) highlight the ‘hybrid fluidity’ of the African condition vis-à-vis the ‘certainties and predetermined outcomes’ inherent within the Eurocentric worldview. Concluding that for context-relevant knowledges, ‘social roles’, ‘domestic duties’ and ‘agrarian tasks’ must be seen as driving the local content of knowledge programmes. Almost discordantly, Western childhoods are evocative of a certain privilege and historical development that have become solidified in theory and practice. An attempt at a prescriptive model of early childhood development, sterilised of these lived realities, naturally results in a quandary. Surmising from the literature and the empirical research, there is a sense that current global ECCD is to globalisation what historical education was to colonisation. On the former, the missionary zeal to export Western knowledges that are deemed essential, universal and generalizable (Penn 2001). These attitudes resonate with the colonialist obsession with spreading their modernity to the uncivilised sections of the world – with evangelising education as a tool.

1.2 The Research and Rationale

This doctoral study was approached by the researcher, as an interested party in education and the welfare of children – as a parent, a teacher, and at once a citizen of a developing country and a continuing ‘globalising’ world. The research emerged almost as a natural part of my profound

belief that children and childhood matter on equal terms with the pervasive dominant societal concerns with adult issues. In addition, coming from a developing world context, the significance of the foregoing motive for this research work, becomes even more relevant; due in part to the ambivalent role that global educational research plays in local practice (Branco 2009; Twum-Danso & Ame 2012; Hannerz 1992; Robinson & Diaz 2006).

In the main, most research and evidence for policy and practice, in early childhood care and development (ECCD) emanate from the so-called Minority World (the Developed World) (Penn 2001, 2010; Myers 1999; Woodhead & Montgomery 2003); established as an authoritative ‘truth’ (Penn 2010: 293). Characteristically, such Western-originated knowledges are deemed essential, scientific and thus generalizable to all contexts. On this basis, it appears the only way out (for contexts without such privileged truths) is to import such ‘truths’ and attempt to fit into local circumstances; as to almost achieve the effect of global homogeneity (Hannerz 1992). Various studies, that predate this doctoral study, however, reveal more conflict rather than concord with local contexts. These dynamics, at the global–local terrain, have occasioned not only disjunctions but significant failures, especially within the developing world context. There are myriad examples of such studies in majority world contexts – among them Uganda (Kisitu 2009), Zimbabwe (Penn 2001), Mali (Penn 2012), Nigeria (Obisanya 2001), Ghana (Twum-Danso & Ame 2012; Laird 2012), and Sub-Saharan Africa (Garcia *et al* 2008) – that suggest the ill-alignment of global precepts and knowledges to the local context.

In the specific case of the setting of this doctoral study, Ghana, a recent policy adoption on early childhood care and development (ECCD Policy 2004) epitomises this malaise – a disjunction between global policy and the local socio-cultural and historical milieu (Twum-Danso & Ame 2012). The disjunction, hinted in this study, implies that local contextual issues among them: contexts of children and childhoods, the stage of development of the communities and country, the catalogue of local circumstances (poverty, disease, infrastructural deficits, and cultural encumbrances, to cite a few) and the general lived realities and norms of such societies, appear inconspicuous relative to the visible global overtones. To address this policy–context disjuncture, this study intends to interrogate both empirical and theoretical sources in a hybridised fashion. The view of this study is to seek context-based explications as they ‘intra-act’ (Barad 2007: 383), albeit, incongruously with imported models from the developed world context.

1.3 The Research Problem

Ghana's ECCD policy and practice lacks depth in its incorporation of sociocultural antecedents (socio-genesis) relative to minority world countries (see accounts in Pound 2011). Consequently, a resolve to mimic and adopt existing programmes result in a disjunctive relationship between the global phenomenon of ECCD and the local Ghanaian context. The outlook of the resultant policy and practice ill-align, as a result, to the local socio-cultural and historical contexts. This doctoral research has problematized the contextual appropriateness of global ECCD practice within the Ghanaian context; insofar as the evidence bases for local practice emerge from out-of-context Western sources.

1.4 The Research Questions

With an interpretive case study methodology, this study has involved deep immersions in both the theoretical literature and the empirical data. Through a continuous iteration the research questions (RQs) emerged and became the centrepiece of this doctoral research. In a sense, the RQs have retained a continuing relationship with both the theoretical literature and the empirical data. The rationale for introducing these questions (RQs) in the Introduction Chapter, is to establish its centrality as the thesis unravels. Suffice to state *pronto* that with an objective to illuminate the unclear boundaries between ECCD phenomenon and its practice in the local Ghanaian context, the following RQs have satisfactorily aided the process of achieving that objective:

1. How implicated is the developed world in the early child education policy, provision and practice in the developing world?
2. How is global early childhood education perceived within the local context of Ghana?
3. What are the characteristics of the global–local dynamics on the policy, provision and practice of early childhood education?
4. What elements informed the development of Ghana's early childhood care and development (ECCD) policy of 2004?
5. How does Ghana's local context and culture feature within current ECCD policy, provision and practice?

6. How influential are stakeholders on ECCD on matters of policy, provision and practice?

1.5 Objectives

This doctoral research in problematizing the contextual appropriateness of global ECCD within local developing world contexts aimed at accomplishing these major objectives.

1. The study applied a case study methodology to seek understandings of the global through the prism of the two local cases, studied in depth, in the Northern Region of Ghana. With this, the study illuminated the apparent unclear boundaries between global ECCD and the local Ghanaian context.
2. With a major limitation on context-specific literature and the paucity of primary research on ECCD in the developing world, a hybrid and a wholeness approach were adopted. This afforded the study with extensive literature to complement the empirical data.
3. Moreover, with the emphasis on culture and context, the study foregrounded the need for local voices to gain prominence relative to the agenda-driven ECCD global positions.
4. Finally, the default to local stakeholder perspectives ensured that authentic narratives – through the empirical research – gave resonance to local voices in juxtaposition to the domineering global templates.

1.6 Overview of Chapter

This introduction chapter has highlighted the contentions within early childhood education, as conceived globally. The focus has been to emphasise the appropriateness of harnessing practice to context; in ways that are both germane, generative and redemptive of local cultures and contexts. From the study, the striking ill-alignments between the global phenomenon of ECCD when supplanted on local contexts consequentially breed ambivalences at the levels of policy, provision and practice. These contentions are captured in this study as the points of congruent and disjunctions that characterise ECCD global–local dynamics. The next chapter of the thesis will

now look at the literature – Chapter Two – to further highlight the areas of tension and to define the theoretical framework within which this study was conceived.

1.7 Organisation of Chapters

This thesis has been constructed following a familiar sequence of: Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Context and Setting of the Study, Case Studies, Discussion and Conclusion.

Chapter One, the current chapter has introduced the critical elements and issues within this doctoral study. Its coverage has entailed the generic conceptualisation of ECCD as a global phenomenon and local attempts to practice it: as exemplified in the Ghanaian ECCD policy of 2004.

Chapter Two of the thesis has considered the conceptual framework for the landscape of early childhood. In this chapter, the major contentions that prevail on the ECCD landscape internationally are considered. As the main theoretical underpinning to the research, this chapter is broken down into two: the conceptual issues and the literature review. To set the basis for engagement with the existing literature, the foundational studies of global acclaim are discussed. The review is essentially traditional and while in-depth, it does not lay systematic claims to a review of existing literature on ECCD. Significant attention has been expended on the binaries of minority versus majority (developed – developing) worlds' interactions on a phenomenon as critical as early childhood.

Chapter Three is dedicated to dealing with the methodological issues of the research. The research questions (RQs) of this study led to a choice of Case Study as a fitting methodology to provide the data that assisted in answering the questions. The four stages of the research have entailed: Pilot Study, a Survey of Provision, the Case Studies, and then Triangulation of the Data, leading to the construction of this thesis.

Chapter Four offers the contextual underpinnings to the whole study. In particular, it serves as a further auxiliary to the introductory chapter – Chapter One. It looks at the context of Ghana and

the policy journey as well as the crucial issues that have affected early childhood care and development (ECCD). The chapter looks at the precolonial antecedents through independent Ghana to the present-day policy framework; captured in the 2004 ECCD Policy.

Chapter Five has been built to contain the in-depth interpretive Case Study. As a multiple case study with two cases, this chapter naturally breaks down into two: Case Study I and Case Study II. Both cases in the Northern Region of Ghana – one in the predominantly urban metropolis of Tamale; the other case study in a partially urban and diffusely rural settlement of Yendi. As similar rather than contrasting cases, the two allowed depth of comparisons to be made promoting converging lines of inquiry.

Chapter Six naturally follows in the wake of the two case studies with a Synthesis of the data resulting from the respective cases. This chapter constitutes the data (findings) and discussion chapter of this study. Multiple opportunities are offered by this chapter to integrate, synthesise and discuss the emergent (albeit expanded) themes from the cross-case analyses. The cross-case comparison shows a convergence of the themes and the desired alignment of the evidence to the initial propositions (RQs).

Finally, Chapter Seven brings closure to the labyrinth of activities that drove this doctoral research. The research began with research questions to guide data collection, literature to seek, and the methodology to aid accomplishment of the study. The conclusion chapter reverts to those initial stances that informed the conduct of this research (RQs): to ascertain how the questions and queries have been addressed by the research data. On the benefit of the evidence, the research concludes that the involvement of the developed world in policy, provision and practice of early childhood education implicates the ‘global’ in the schooling futures of children in the developing world. For this doctoral study, these have highlighted significant points of congruence and disjunctions, in the global–local dynamics on early childhood care and development (ECCD).

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Part I – Foundation Studies, Theoretical Constructs and Conceptual Framework

This Chapter is dedicated to the corpus of literature and studies that have influenced developments in the field of early childhood care and development (ECCD). It is aimed at unearthing the very foundations that underpin the theoretical and philosophical formulations within the discourse of early childhood care and development (ECCD). The chapter throws the spotlight on contentions that prevail in the global–local interactions on early childhood. The argument that runs through the thesis suggests that while common practice across the globe today, ECCD as conceived and practiced in Ghana entails heavy influences of the global template. The implications of this highlight the issues of ill--alignment of resultant practice to the local socio-historical and cultural contexts. The intimation that the developed world is implicated in the character of ECCD policy and provision in the developing world stem from this position.

Early childhood care and development (ECCD) is a prolific subject: therefore, the vast expanse of the literature implies that the criteria for literature to be included in this study has been rigorously determined. For ease, the chapter has been broken down into two major parts. Part I *Foundational Studies, Theoretical Constructs and Conceptual Framework* is intent on highlighting relevant literature (major studies) that has influenced contemporary discourse and spawned further academic works in the field. Part II tagged as *Literature Review* is reserved for a critical review of relevant themes that have emerged out of the theoretical literature and the empirical data. In the scheme of things, the literature review is critical considering that it served as the initial gateway that opened pathways (Evans, Gruba & Zobel 2014) for further reconnaissance of the field of early childhood. In particular, significant engagement with the debates, discussions and issues led to the emergence and further refinement of the research questions.

This section of the chapter (Part I) has engaged with the major and pioneering studies, as well as the current positions, in the field of ECCD. The interests of the study, largely, are the practices that contextualise early childhood education; and prevalent disjunctions between Western-conceived ECCD practices and the developing world context. To this extent, the particular studies chosen for discussion (in this section) meet the relevant criteria for inclusion. Among the criteria are: that the literature should have as its focus early childhood care and development; that it considered the implications of the developing world's children's exposure to Western-driven ECCD programmes; further, coupled with the earlier criteria, literature with comparative and contextual effect and educational worth (across developing–developed world binary); and much more broadly, early childhood education literature of contemporary and interdisciplinary relevance. For balance, excluded material related to that which focuses profusely on medical issues related to children and childhood.

2.2 A Conceptual Framework on Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)

The attempt in this study is to construct a framework within which early childhood care and development is conceptualised as a 'praxis'. Paulo Freire's (1970) concept of praxis – as elucidated in *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* – by which he meant the dialectical relationship between *action* and *reflection* provides a useful conceptual frame to construct this world-view of early childhood education. By praxis, Freire (1970: 125) meant:

Human action consists of action and reflection: it is praxis; it is a transformation of the world. And as praxis, it requires theory to illuminate it. Human activity is theory and practice; it is reflection and action. It cannot be reduced to verbalism or activism.

By conceptualising early childhood care and development as a praxis, an allowance is created for seeking out the interconnections that bring forth action. At the same time such conceptualisation engineers the entrapment of action in a continuing process of reflection – in a mutually reproductive fashion. At its core, early childhood care and development (ECCD), when conceptualised as a praxis, portends an educational philosophy: implied in the labyrinth of policy, provision and practice that it has become associated with across the globe. Siraj-Blatchford (2009: 155) affirms the ‘educational system’ model of conceptualising ECCD, equally insisting on its rootedness in ‘theory and practice’. This is important to the conceptualisation of ECCD sought in this study: as the phenomenon of ECCD naturally materialises in policy, provision and practice – all in the realm of action. Within the respective domains of policy, provision and practice the essential elements are the iterative reflections that take place. Reflection then becomes an imperative in the constitution of the machinery for meaning-making. Here, there is an intertwined process at play – with theory and practice/action and reflection – dialectically reproducing one another as they are inextricably linked. Therefore, a composite phenomenon such as ECCD, when put into action (practice) in contexts that lack the reflective basis (along with the complementarity of theory) consequentially present perceptual disjunctions and disarticulations – imperceptibly assuming indiscernibility as a praxis.

The central argument that underpin this doctoral study is that the developed world (global) has defined the character of policy, provision and practice of ECCD in Ghana, thus questioning the essential leanings of existing ECCD programmes to the local socio-cultural contexts, which often constitutes the reflective basis for meaning-making. This heralds a disjunction between action and reflection; because of a lack of adherence to the lived realities of contexts of practice. Essentially, the argument is that for ECCD to make meaning within the developing world context – such as Ghana – efforts must be geared to harnessing practice and provision to context and culture. Context, here, adopts the extended understandings – the ‘relational’ ‘social’ and ‘personal’ character – as conveyed in Graue and Walsh (1998: 11). In essence, neglect of context renders inexplicable the phenomenon of ECCD praxis, when meaning-making and knowledge construction are the essential objective (Branco 2009).

By the same token, context demands that children are situated – within place and time – as co-constructors, in the social constructionist epistemological sense (Montgomery 2003). Some researchers advocate that the child must be at the heart of ‘conceptual and cultural frameworks’ (Wyness 2012: 164). By this positioning, there is a sense of alienation and a-contextualisation in the Ghanaian case: where children are disengaged from their ‘socio-genetic’ contexts (Branco 2009: 49) through exposure to foreign-conceived ECCD programmes. The complementarity of two assumptions offers a likely explanation. The first is the hegemonic position of owning privileged knowledge by the developed world, often with alacrity and intent to universalise. The second is the naïve acquiescence to such knowledges, presumptive of its pliability, within recipient local contexts. Consequently, ECCD provision predicated on imitated reflective basis, ultimately, instantiate the purported disjunctions in local praxis, as argued in this study.

In their Effective Provision of Preschool Education (EPPE) project, Sylva and colleagues (2010) placed the child as the main empirical focus – within ‘concentric rings’ (Bronfenbrenner 1979). While developmentalist and Western, in its conceptualisation, the EPPE model provides another useful frame of reference for this study. The Ghanaian child, in its conception, constantly interacts with the outer rings of family, teachers, the community, social institutions, culture, and national cum international processes. The contrast presents in the prevalent cultural alienation of children – ignoring their sociogenic contexts – through exposure to Western ECCD models. This is significant, as it holds a lot of relevance to the future trajectories of these children and their relationship with education and schooling. Some researchers have implicated the disruptive tendencies at later educational stages – such as drop outs, early exits and irregular schooling – on the perceived a-contextualisation of educational provision (Ananga 2011; Sabates *et al* 2010; Ampiah & Adu-Yeboah 2009; Akyeampong *et al* 2007).

In this study, ECCD as practiced in the developing world context, and Ghana for that matter, raises contentions that border on contextual and cultural appropriateness. This point raises a legitimisation question: requiring an alignment

of both socio-historical underpinnings to the sorts of ECCD praxis eventually adopted. To this extent, the histories and sociogenetic connections of ECCD to the contexts of practice are critical. The point of this argument is that ECCD, as globally conceived has established bases within Western contexts. Therefore, many see a tenuous connectivity (in the justifications) for its practice in developing countries such as Ghana. Without a robust rootedness, in the histories and cultures of the society, an attempt to supplant a global phenomenon, such as ECCD, signify a future of disjunctive interactions in the contexts of practice. Pence and Nsamenang (2008: 39–40) regard the claim by the World Bank that ECD in Africa was ‘built on the strengths of African tradition and culture’ as merely ‘partial truth’. There is no gainsaying that, this study’s quest to establish contextual relevance for ECCD practice, in the developing world, is paramount. It defines the justification – as a societal demand or a social need (Fleer et al. 2009). Hence, contexts without the reflective basis for particular praxis suffer a likely disarticulation – between the phenomenon and the context – especially in the provisions that are designed to account for children and childhood in the early years.

2.3 Theorising Context

There has been a tide of literature critical of attempts to offer representations of children and childhood in universal and global terms (Fleer et al. 2009; James and Prout 1997; UNESCO 2007; OECD 2001; Twum-Danso & Ame 2012; Nsamenang 2009; Pence and Hix-Small 2007). Such approaches have been discredited on the basis that such representations embody a particularistic agenda based on the assumption that the circumstances of children are universalizable and generalisable; along with a zeal to export such essentialised knowledges and practices – from Western (developed countries) – as global standards (Fleer et al 2009; Penn 2009; Penn 2009; Anderson-Levitt 2003). The assumptions here are dual: that children and childhood hold the same characteristics and thus are universal. Further, contexts receptively accommodate the univocal global template, entailed in current conception of ECCD, with a mere requirement to temper it with minor cultural variations and adjustments. These assumptions have a global appeal with even internationally-renowned institutions reflecting such universal positions.

Bernard van Leer Foundation (BvLF), majorly associated with childhood advocacy and research, exemplifies this: underscoring an ‘underlying universality...doing the same sorts of things for the same sorts of reasons’ (1994: 9); as ‘children are pretty much the same everywhere and the people teaching them have pretty much the same ideas’ (Weikart 1999 cited in Penn 2001: 294). These stances are quite comfortably rooted in the global discourse; often via the conduits of powerful global agencies that equally serve as aid agencies for the developing world. As argued earlier, the rationale for the thesis partly stems from its intent on theorising context, as the location for both theory and practice. Within the larger perspective of the research, however, further explanations were sought to highlight the purposeful fitness to context the practice of ECCD in a developing country, such as Ghana.

The Oxford (online) Dictionary defines context as ‘the circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement, or idea, and in terms of which it can be fully understood.’ By this definition, where meaning-making is the *raison d’être*, essentials such as local practice along with the processes that engender holistic comprehension are indispensable. Therefore, to understand the childhood of Africans, and Ghanaian children for that matter, the context undoubtedly has to be within such indigenous contexts. Contextualising the Ghanaian context applies Graue and Walsh’s extension of context to include the relational social and personal (1998: 11). The reasoning for this is simple: in Ghanaian culture, childhood and practice related to it materialise at the realms beyond the individual. Similar attitudes define the generality of African culture; a dissolution of individualism within the collective realm of society. In all essentials, Ghana as an African country naturally sees no contradictions in accepting its values as anything but African. Even in the globalising context, references are made vaguely to indigenous as representative of non-Western cultures; with varied and sometimes independent assertions of their own domestic culture, and yet still profoundly accepting of shared cultures. This clarification is important, for the avoidance of doubt, when African (or indigenous) references are made rather than the country specific ascription, when alluding to the Ghanaian contexts.

2.4 Childhood and ECCD: the Ghanaian Context

In Ghana, and for that matter Africa, a child while legally and biologically-linked to a family, parenting and ownership happen within the social realm (Fortes 1943; Goody 1973; 1982; Kaye 1962; African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child – ACRWC 1999; LeVine 2008). A Childhood – at once of *being* and *becoming* – lived on *Ubuntu*: not individualism but on ‘I am because we are’ (*Xhosa* – South African philosophy). This context offers meaning, even if at times diffuse in its tendencies, its resolve is to fashion out a well-rounded and proper member of the community (Kaye 1962; Laird 2012; Barnhardt & Kawagley 2008; Fortes 2008; Gyekye 1996). Current attempts to prescribe a Westernised worldview adds to the complexities in conceptualising and situating children within indigenous cultures. Thus, indigenous conceptualisations intent on offering clarity on the ‘ontological status’ of children suffer a fracture in its cultural and contextual authenticity (Wyness 2012: 214), in societies such as northern Ghana.

As a clear instantiation of the nuances in the global–local dynamics on childhood, Meyer Fortes (2008), in his ethnographic research among the Tallensi of northern Ghana, explains the conflation of the social and the academic, in the daily lived realities of children. Education, to wit, has to adopt a new praxis: one of sociogenetic relevance tied to children’s experience and contexts; instead of the current developmentalist chronology based on age and stage – and the mastery of tasks and certain competencies (Barnhardt and Kawagley 2008; Pence & Nsamenang 2008; Twum-Danso 2009; Ogbu 1981; Delpitt 1988; Jibson 1991). Be that as it may, a probe is required on the nexus between such childhood typology and the Western educational systems that have become so pervasive and dominant in indigenous settings. This thesis conducted a review of some of the studies that shed light on prevailing justifications for the adoption of novel global educational programmes, such as ECCD.

2.5 Global Reach of the Research on ECCD

This study adopts the meaning given to ECCD as an all-embracing term for policy, provision and practice as it affects children and childhoods from zero to eight years. Thus, ECCD is set as a phenomenon – with its composite praxis – irrespective of the terrain of practice. Of greater essence however is that, meaningful praxis ought to have firm rootedness in the appropriate contexts. The limitations of current applications of global knowledges to developing world contexts, ostensibly evidences this. To allow for uniformity in the use of terminology, references are made to the developed and developing worlds interchangeably with Minority World (Developed world) and Majority World (Developing world). Elsewhere, some globalisation discourses use the terms ‘Core’ and ‘Periphery’: meanings drawn from imperial colonial nomenclature defining the relationship between the Metropole and the Colony – one that has at its core, continuing dependency of the latter on the former (Connell 2007).

Most research and evidence for policy and practice, in early childhood care and development (ECCD) emanate from the so-called Minority World (Penn 2001, 2010; Myers 1999; Woodhead & Montgomery 2003). Globally, these have assumed hegemonic status, within the early childhood discourse: effectively universalised as best practice. With most of the world’s children – 90% of whom – living in the majority world, it is unimaginable that 90% of the literature on child development emanate from the minority world (Pence and Hix-Small 2007). With this level of dominance, such knowledges assume *essentialism*, as they have scientific basis; *generalizability* ‘with minor cultural variations’; and *universalist* in their effect (Penn 2001). Granted stances that have meaning within Western cultures; but are deemed empirically implausible as their assumed universalisms are argumentatively incongruous (Joas & Knöbl 2009) in juxtaposition with indigenous contexts.

There is a credibility, if not a validity, issue in applying findings of research, from such minority populations and cultures, to a majority population. Connell’s (2007: 212) antipodean reflections perceive a ‘false sense of universality’ to build on the experience of a privileged 600 million people; to apply and account for the remainder of the 6000 million people. This dominant trend in the early childhood discourse, while not different to other disciplines has a resultant hegemonic

discourse which offers a univocal proposition, the only alternative to which being conformity; especially in contexts bereft of such essential knowledges. For post-colonial societies, such as Ghana, such processes naturally result from already enforced cultural discontinuities; thus, presenting a pre-existing receptive ‘colonising structure’ (Mudimbe 1988). Such deliberate disablement present majority world contexts with irresistible ready-made educational programmes; even if Western-driven. The subsequent conformity to such essential knowledge products, as a consequence, configure the tensions and contentions that further foment the disarticulations of phenomenon from contexts.

Ghana’s recent ECCD Policy of 2004 epitomises this malaise – a disjunction between a policy and the socio-cultural and historical milieu. To address these disarticulations, this study has interrogated both empirical and theoretical sources. Mostly, limitations tended to enforce an application of hybrid constructions. By this, allowing for affordances that sought context-based explications; as they ‘intra-act’ (Barad 2007: 383), this study has argued, incongruously with ECCD models from the developed world context. An approach based on hybridity (Yelland and Kilderry 2006: 6) – with benign fusion of knowledges – has aided pragmatic utilisation of literature and data heightening intelligibility. It is important to acknowledge that such hybridity is not averse to the disjunction-prone tendencies highlighted thus far. Fler and colleagues (2009) write about possibilities for a ‘wholeness approach’ that straddle and transcend the boundaries of the typical binaries: global/local; child/adult; general/particular; universal/individual – expediently, still seeking frameworks that foreground contexts of children and childhood. The constant appeal to context appears contentious in the face of world culture theorising; in particular, the increasing gregariousness toward a world polity seems to render institutions and educational practice more isomorphic. In the end, therefore, the so-called local and indigenous become implicated within the swathes of the global agency. Gibson-Graham’s (2003: 50) contention that the local is both ‘constrained’ and ‘confined’ by the global offers an apt explication here.

2.6 Literature Search

The insistence on contextual relevance had implications on the progress of the study. The strategy of beginning from the particular to the general – as a disposition in establishing the arch-importance of context – squandered immense and immeasurable time, at the initial stages of this research. Using the University's library electronic catalogue (later extended to Google Scholar and other search engines and academic online platforms); searches initially focussed on early childhood, childhood, child development, development psychology, child outcomes, pre-primary, preschool, African children, learner interest, learner lethargy, learner elasticity, Ghana, Ghanaian childhood, Ghanaian children, developmentalism, the society and children.

Interestingly, the initial searches, largely dominated by the proximal hankering for context, focussed on Ghana, Africa and general childhood permutations, produced leads that resulted in three (3) text-books from the university system; one dating back to 1965; with another just a chapter in an edited book; the third being an E-book with a focus on Africa, but with only two chapters on Ghana. A sequential expansion with increasing frustration, resulted in a call for help to my Supervisor; whose subsequent recommendation to consult ERIC (Education Resource Information Centre) glowingly led to a plethora of choice and opportunities (journals, e-resources, and collected studies, among others). Still, foregrounding the initial aims of the research in the context of the available literature, was fast becoming a nightmare.

Practically, searches within journals and databases assisted with targeting subject specific journals and studies: the British Educational Index; International Journal of Early Childhood and Special Education; Early Childhood Research and Practice; Childhood; Journal of Research in Childhood Education; Early Childhood Research Quarterly; the Lancet; among others. With possibilities for on-line readings and print outs, many journal articles have assisted with the progress made. An equally crucial tactic was the use of the list of references and bibliography as leads (so-called mining). Although, sometimes a bit decentring and causing loss of focus, these proved useful and offered serendipitous finds. Other sources of literature emerged with the opportunities to explore institutional documents, once

the study progressed to the fieldwork: policy documents, school profiles, curriculum, text books, story books, international policy documents and laws, among others.

With growing knowledge of the subject area – due to immersion in the early childhood education literature – soaring confidence of possible tangents that the study could assume began to emerge; effectively lifting the blinkering on the initial confusions of a little comprehended phenomenon. Continuing readings along with sporadic write-ups and copious note-taking eventually led to a focussed search; resulting in the construction of the research questions (RQs). The emergence of these RQs – a eureka moment – marked a real commencement in my journey as a doctoral researcher. A relationship – both dialectic and iterative – thus commenced between the literature (now affirmatively called) and the RQs, for the enduring length of the study. The University library (My Library Account) holds an up-to-date ‘reading history’ of 137 books, on its record. In addition, a guestimate of a similar number of journal articles would have been consulted in the period of this research. While the developing RQs assisted in narrowing and grounding the search and research closer to the existing literature, and other epistemological traditions; the mass of what substantially got reviewed have been accommodated, within the wider context of global interactions of knowledges across contexts and cultures. Karen Barad (2010) wisely counsels that no existence is exclusively individualistic. Philosophically, a slight movement to accommodate other worldviews to meet a societal need – and fill the very gaps that nearly hampered this research – has beneficently urged progress of this research work. The references to using approaches of hybridity (in the next section), to complement the deficits perceived from the trawl of the literature, aptly find explanation from the foregoing.

2.7 Hybrid Approach to the Literature on ECCD

While disputing the evidential basis for universalising ECCD practices, along with globally-sponsored ideas of the global child, most early childhood research seeks ways to negotiate the boundaries within contexts (Pence and Hix-Small 2007; Branco 2009; Nsamenang 2009; Fleeer 2009). The varied ‘ecological’ understandings

of context notwithstanding, there is a grudging yet resigned acceptance of a dominant discourse, with knowledge systems and products from minority world contexts reified with celestial epistemic privileges. With resistance to such essentialized knowledges proving to be an exercise in futility, new forms of engagements are gradually taking centre stage. In the adoption of a mutual fusion of knowledges, this study assumed possible mutations and terminologies in the attempt to describe such hybrid phenomenon. There are references to generative approaches (post-colonialists); cultural dialogue (among some world-culture theorists); even a 'blended' approach (Pence & Nsamenang 2008) as well as the already cited 'wholeness approach' by Fler and colleagues (2009). Myers (1999: 10) contends that these tensions, in the encounter among received truths – from minority world contexts – and local knowledge rooted in local values in the majority world, 'may overlap, but are different'. This position attempts to settle the difficulties in the progressive possibilities in applying hybrid approaches to support research in minority world contexts.

The foregoing discussion illustrates the challenges that emanate from demands for context-specific literature. Ultimately, it is imperative to foreground the rationale for fusion of otherwise incongruous conceptual positions. Insofar as this study is concerned, such hybrid models must uphold the integrity of indigenous local knowledges as they contextually 'intra-act' to create generative knowledges – new yet still constitutive of the indigenous context (Yelland and Kilderry 2006).

2.8 Contemporary Theoretical Landscape of ECCD

Early childhood is a prolific subject and presents vast literature. As has been made clear, the discussed literature has been purposively selected, in line with the relevant criteria. This section of the chapter aims to highlight important studies that have spawned much academic literature (Penn 2010; Penn et al 2006); especially on ECCD and the future outcomes. The intent is for a provocative discussion: largely arising out of the Western and non-Western studies with universal implications; yet contradictorily having minimal regard to context (Pence and Hix-Small 2007; Fler et al. 2009; Twum-Danso and Ame 2012).

Context as conceptualised earlier extends to the literature review. And this review has unearthed disjunctions of sorts – in the early childhood discourse – alarmingly strong on claims but thin on contextual relevance; on the global–local epistemic transactional realm, in particular, the disjunctive relationship between Western-based sources implicated in the justifications for ECCD practice in the developing world. The following is an attempt to tease out the prevalent characteristics of existing scholarship on early childhood in the developing world:

- i) A certain tokenism in attention given to original research on ECCD in the developing world. In addition, the few exceptions are predominantly by authorship sources ‘foreign’ to the context. Therefore, the mass expanse of available academic literature on ECCD appear to have tenuous connections to the realities confronting majority world children and childhoods;
- ii) The paucity of minority world-specific relevant content – accentuates a cavalier (almost nonchalant) attitude – resulting in tempered critique of the epistemic global dominance by the minority world. In particular, the substantial variations between minority and majority world contexts: on ECCD policy, provision and practice – in relation to the facts of differential needs, contexts, and periods (modern/postmodern/post-colonial/post-structural);
- iii) Within these inequities emerge an exclusionary epistemic advantage to academic dominance and superiority granted to ECCD literature from minority world contexts. As a result, early childhood education is in a grip of a prevailing hegemonic discourse, in the guise of benign globalising actors and forces. Significant roles are played by certain international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) (Save the Children, Plan International and Bernard van Leer Foundation among others); UN agencies (UNESCO and UNICEF); the World Bank. (WB); within the childhoods of

developing world children. Examples abound in the WBs promotion of ECCD based on financial resourcing and sponsorship of human capital positioning of ECCD provision. Moreover, a seeming universalising thematic approach, implied in UNESCO's Education for All Global Monitoring Reports (EFA – GMR) has sought to promote a univocal set of ideas.

- iv) On the generality of the above, there is a conscious, even coercive, effort to export these knowledge products to contexts both sterilised and bereft of this expertise: with purported justifications for a gold standard for 'best practice' in early childhood education.

The foregoing characterisation of the swathes of existing literature in the field, largely influenced the attitude and approach the research took in the selection and review of the literature, because, for the most part serious limitations became apparent; thus questioning the relevance of some of the literature to the context of the study. Instructively, seeking to hybrid knowledges point to the diminutive metaphorical space allowed indigenous conceptions within the prevailing discourses.

2.9 Foundational Studies on ECCD in Developed World Contexts

This section is aimed at literature in minority world contexts. These are the definitive and foundational studies that now configure (and offer the evidence basis for) the accepted practices within the ECCD landscape. These as argued have become universalised; in their assumed potentialities that transcend minority world boundaries. These studies, having met the criteria, also proved overly domineering (and almost indispensable), compared to similar academic works and studies. Characteristically, the US has dominated research within early childhood education. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the studies selected, while Western in their global positioning, originate mostly from the US, with a few exceptions. In line with the inclusion criteria, the three pioneering researches that are often-cited, as offering an evidence basis for ECCD around the globe – the High/Scope Perry Preschool

Project (PPP) of 1962; the Abecedarian Study of 1972; and the Chicago Child-Parent Centres (CPC) of 1967 – have been discussed. The aim is to conclude Part I of this review chapter foregrounded on the knowledge basis for the contentions and engagements among writers, commentators and professionals in the early childhood sector. The review of the elected studies within this doctoral study is not outlandish: The Early Years' Review Group of the EPPI Centre (incidentally selected for review) intimated that the three (PPP, Abecedarian, and the Chicago CPC) were the studies that met their criteria – in their attempt to answer the question of future effects of ECCD interventions.

2.9.1 The United States of America: The Longitudinal Studies (High/Scope Perry Preschool Project; the Abecedarian; the Chicago Child-Parent Centers (CPC))

There is no denying the century long dominance of the United States of America (US) in the fields of early childhood and child development perspectives across the globe. Such hegemonic dominance is fraught with questions of validity and reliability of the resultant global precepts and postulates that emanate from such a narrow sample. Characteristically, US psychologists in 99 percent of cases use localised samples; enjoy a privileged status among global institutions (such as the WB); and most of all, data is skewed with narrow samples based on white middle class children (Woodhead 1998). The mass of the literature that these studies have spawned hold global acclaim and reach. Often these are applicable universally, with claims of scientific basis, and essentialized by world actors, thus affecting every facet of ECCD, both within and without minority world contexts.

Some researchers have questioned whether precepts for a 'universal science of child development' could be reliably and narrowly 'drawn from sampling on such a population' (Penn 2001: 296). The intellectual posture of the US fuels the hegemony that almost shuts down possibilities for a cross-cultural perspective to support the early childhood field. Bloch asserts that the overly dominant influence of the US in early childhood policy formulation is 'one reason for the lack of recognition or acceptance of alternative theoretical and methodological perspectives in ECE' (1992: 3). Evidentially, the footprints lie in the world-scale

research and studies that have emanated from the US, in the fields of child development and the early years.

The main studies, notably the High Scope Perry Preschool Project; the Chicago Child-Parent-Centres; and the Abecedarian Studies will now be interrogated to conclude this initial conceptual construction of the literature review.

2.9.1.1 High/Scope Perry Preschool Project (PPP)

The Perry Preschool Project (PPP) to date represents and remains the biggest and longest running programme in preschool education. With its longitudinal methodology, of documenting ‘preschool advantage’ and effects up to age 40, the project enjoys a world-wide acclaim. The findings from the PPP, have fuelled claims of human capital arguments and models of investment in the early years. This positioning of early childhood education has engendered immense support and growth of ECCD programmes across the globe. Crucial findings have highlighted higher lifetime earnings, greater employment stability, higher educational attainment, greater family stability, and dramatically reduced involvement with crime. Through a range of varied permutations of the cost–benefit analysis, it is envisaged that altogether these named benefits result in a public benefit of almost \$13 (US Dollars) for every public dollar invested in an early childhood education programme (Schweinhart et al. 2005). Some of the main features of the study include the following:

- The study was launched between 1962 and 1967 with 123 children aged 3 and 4 years.
- Its target was African-American children born in poverty who were at the risk of failing in school in the Michigan School District.
- Children were given a 2-year preschool education programme for 3 and 4-year-olds.
- The study applied randomised assignment to the programme and control groups. Fifty-eight (58) children were assigned to a programme group that received a high-quality preschool

programme at ages 3 and 4. Then, sixty-five (65) children assigned to another group that received no preschool programme

- Designed as a longitudinal study, it was aimed at both short-term and long-term effects of preschool on children: the study documented at certain milestones the sorts of preschool advantages that came in the wake of exposure to the programme. These milestones included ages 15, 19, 23, and 40.
- Highly qualified teachers with bachelor's degrees and certification in education were engaged; and each teacher served 5–6 children. In terms of programme operationalisation, the teachers used the High/Scope educational model in daily two and half-hour classes and visited families weekly. Classroom and learning schedule supported children's self-initiated activities, with both small-group and large-group activities.

Major Findings

The major findings for the High/Scope PPP were reported at certain milestones. Project staff collected data annually on both groups from ages 3 through 11 and again at ages 14, 15, 19, 27, and 40, with a missing data rate of only 6% across all measures. The study has produced eight monographs over the years; based on a staged data collection and reporting system. The major findings have mostly featured education, economic performance and crime prevention; gauging programme effects through age 40 (Schweinhart et al. 2005).

The High/Scope researchers – with the complement of other researchers – revel in the success of the study. The study is cited as the pioneering study in the area of early education and its effect on low-income and at-risk children. Schweinhart (2003: 2) has insisted that High/Scope was 'one of the first to take its findings beyond professional circles and into the public debate'. Among its highlighted findings and results are as follows.

- i. On *education*, there was substantial effects on grade improvements and graduation rates, at age 27. Statistically, substantial variation between the assigned group and controlled group (71% vs. 54%); registering stronger on female groups of 85% vs. 35% graduating from high school. Equally, gains on educational performance supported school readiness, among attendees.
- ii. *Economically*, securing and retention of jobs which occasioned substantial earnings were recorded. Results showed that between programme and non-programme groups: better wages, owned a second car (30% vs. 13%), owned their own home (36% vs. 13%), as well as not claiming support from social services distinguished and registered effects of intervention. Such gains at later ages such as 27 years credited the study with long-term gains; even if fade-out was occasioned at age 7.
- iii. *Crime* records were impacted as records of police encounters for offences by age 28, resulting in arrests five times or more showed 7% of programme group and 35% no-programme group was found.

An overall summation of the costs and benefits showed real and significant gains to the public, alongside the added individual benefits to programme attendees. This, according to the researchers, was an indication that such interventions are a crucial investment to ward off future costs while redeeming benefits of that early investment in children's lives. Moreover, as the data was collected from childhood (ages 3–11), through adolescence and into adulthood (ages 39–41), a causal effect will indicate that the earlier gains in motivation due to high performance increases successes with multiplier effects across other developmental phases of life. Schweinhart (2003: 8) however issues a caveat, in the political attempts to overestimate what high quality preschool attendance alone can achieve in relation to social problems such as poverty, unemployment, and crime among others.

To address the problems of poverty, welfare dependence, crime, drug abuse, and unemployment, governments must also employ a range of other social policy strategies. Affordable housing, ready access to health care, effective job-training programs, reduced

institutional racism, and improved educational opportunities at all levels are essential. High-quality preschool education should be part of a multifaceted effort to solve our social problems; it is far from the only solution. Its role should be neither overrated nor underrated.

Early childhood care and development programmes therefore, in and by themselves lack the magic bullet to arrest such social ills that create disadvantage as poverty, unemployment, crime and access and quality issues that affect education (Arnold 2004; Zigler 2003; Nsamenang 2009; Penn 2010). Be that as it may, High/Scope remains a strong pillar and foundational intervention study that add to the legitimization of the Western dominance in the early childhood discourse. The contention around the attempt to construct a global template; with a strong scientific basis for the universal application of ECCD has its roots here. The critique of local contextual relevance notwithstanding.

2.9.1.2 The Abecedarian Study

Similar to the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project, the Abecedarian Project is one of the oft-cited studies – with a global reach – to evidence the long-term effects of exposure to high quality early education. While similarities extend to its longitudinal methodology and choice of intervention style; differences present in relation to the length and time of the study (commenced in 1972 and followed till age 21), ages enrolled, and to the areas that are emphasized in the findings and reporting of the project. Crucial features included:

- Abecedarian was designed as a longitudinal study focussed on at-risk children faced with developmental delays and school failures who were followed from birth to age 21;
- As a Centre-Based intervention in North Carolina, the programme applied two levels of intervention: preschool aged children and primary aged children;

- To operationalise the programme, one teacher was assigned to each child and family. These resource teachers made 17 school visits, and about 15 home visits per year in addition to summertime activities;
- About 98% of participants came from low-income and African-American families. The sample included 111 infants from 109 families – 57 randomly assigned to the intervention group and 54 to the control group: 4 children withdrew early in the study, leaving 107 children in the initial analysis sample (Ramey & Campbell, 1984);
- The teachers employed had varied qualifications: some with a degree in early childhood, others with extensive experience with working with children.

Major Findings

As a longitudinal design, the project reported at certain milestones: data were obtained and analysed for the participants at ages 8, 12, 15, 18, and 21 years. By way of summary, as in the PPP study the Abecedarian project recorded positive long-term effects on programme participants compared to the control groups. Among the relevant findings were: positive potential future earnings and maternal earnings; health benefits recorded showed a potential decrease in smoking; with the cost-benefit calculation at \$4 (US) Dollars for every \$1 (US) Dollar spent on a child. Other educational benefits reported amounted to enhanced long-term IQ and academic achievements; as well as college enrolment at age 21 that showed 36% against 14% among assigned and controlled groups. Finally, Abecedarian reported improved quality of life due to the mitigation of the negative effects of low quality of early home environment. For instance, follow up analysis at age 21 showed a significant relationship between the quality of the home environment and depression in the control group, compared to the treatment group (McLaughlin et al. 2007).

2.9.1.3 The Chicago Child-Parent Centers (CPC) Study

The Chicago Child-Parent Center (CPC) programme was the third in line among the chosen pioneering studies (PPP and Abecedarian among the earlier ones) on the role of early intervention in children to mitigate future risks and costs to society. Like its predecessors, the Chicago CPC intervention report, concordantly, huge gains from the programme's attempt to resource and rescue at-risk children and their families. In terms of its essential features it differed slightly from the earlier two studies – the High/Scope and the Abecedarian. As an example, its services covered children up to the age of 9; to gauge at what stages intervention proved most effective. Characteristically:

- The Chicago CPC was similarly designed as a longitudinal study covering twenty-four schools nation-wide between 1983 to 1986;
- Intervention went beyond the child to extensive family support services. For the 989 children enrolled, educational support was provided in a high-quality setting from ages 3–9;
- Other elements included free meals, one-on-one meetings with teachers, parent workshops, healthcare and compulsory classroom volunteer time.

Major Findings

As indicated earlier, the Chicago CPC is perceived as the complimentary study to complete the triad – the first two studies being the High/Scope PPP and the Abecedarian. Therefore, findings and results appear to correspond to what came before (Mann et al. 2001).

- The Chicago CPC report of benefits that outweigh, significantly, the costs of intervention in early childhood;
- Also, the study recorded long-lasting benefits for the children and the families with the CPC pre-schoolers outperforming peers in

areas such as grade retention, high school and college attendance and completion, and rate of full-time employment;

- Significantly, there were marked differences between the intervention group and their peers: 29% graduation rate from high school; less likely to drift into special education – 41% reduction; 33% lower juvenile arrests; and a reduction in the maltreatment of children, almost 51%;
- For the cost-benefit analysis for every \$1 (US) Dollar spent the return to the public was calculated at \$7.10 (US) Dollars (Mann et al. 2001).

2.9.1.4 Discussion of the Three Studies from the US

It is not unusual to combine the three (3) studies – the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project, the Abecedarian Project and the Chicago Child-Parent Centres – in discussion and analyses – as the leading and most cited sources. This study already cites such instance with the example from the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI-Centre) in the third review (by the Early Years' Review Group) of all centre-based interventions. In their review – as in this case – the three longitudinal studies served as the fulcrum of analysis (Penn et al. 2006).

The architects of the respective projects deem the outcomes of their research as constituting a 'strong, robust evidence of the lasting effects of high-quality preschool programs on young children living in poverty' (Schweinhart 2003: 1). The cooperative attempt among the various projects to highlight emphatically the positive results of earlier studies has assisted in the solidification of the three as robust basis to rationalise the practice of early childhood education, especially providing an incontrovertible bastion of defence for the practice of early intervention in children for future long-term advantages. To an extent, the three studies have had a universalising effect on praxis within early childhood education.

The universal success equally resonates with the criticisms that indict an otherwise useful cohort of studies; even with its contextual leanings to North America.

In their early years' review, the EPPI-Centre recognised the dominance of the field of early childhood intervention studies, by the US, with a wish that some of the highlighted successes could be reined in. In particular, a review of the three studies show contradictions in the way cost-benefits analyses are achieved. Citing the Abecedarian project's zero-impact on crime, being the most extensive intervention; the Review Group further questioned the other two studies reliance on crime as the areas for cost savings. In addition, the longitudinal nature of the studies have been deemed problematic: for example, the issues (such as single parenthood, race, drugs and crime) seen to be crucial in the 1960s (by the High Scope PPP), the 1970s (by the Abecedarian Project) and the 1980s Chicago CPCs quite quickly, with the passage of time, could become 'dated or irrelevant over the intervening years' (Penn et al 2006: 2). Also, crucial to context, is the ethics of the methodology used to apply to the studies: the issue of targeted intervention could be harmful to non-programme children (in the controlled group), considering the prioritised place of children's wellbeing. In a post-Convention on the Rights of Children world, to privilege a race or even target discriminatorily particular interventions, would be found problematic with possible accusations of impropriety, resistance and questions of relevance.

The hallmark of this research is its uncompromising quest to establish contextual appropriateness. Even while the US share similar demographics with other OECD peers, academics and researchers still raise questions of context on possible generalisability to peer countries, among the OECD countries. Even more far flung is the contention that the robust and scientific foundations of the research supersede contextual considerations. In furtherance, however essential such knowledges tend to be, early childhood and childhood generally remain context and culture dependent. To that extent, Ghana as a developing country both embody and exemplify such a context-specific critique.

Ghana is a developing country with a largely poor population. In adopting an ECCD policy, even if universal provision of early childhood was beneficial, local capacity and circumstances raise questions of its effective workings. The evidence for early intervention, for long term or short-term benefits to poor children, presents a certain ambiguity. Questions equally relate to the origins of such dramatic interventions, especially coming from the United States and the inequalities that have persisted. The US has been cited as having a very high inequality (gini rating of 40.8 percent) (WB 2013). This, in spite of the corpus of studies and intervention programmes – at both the State and federal levels. The scale and reach of, for instance, the *Head Start* intervention programme dating back to 1965 fuel scepticism on the evidential basis for universalising early childhood education, based on claims of socio-economic impact (Kagan 2002). The US ‘War on Poverty’ regarded such educational intervention as the surest way to compensate for disadvantages suffered due to poverty (ibid). There appears to be a self-contradiction here: with the huge numbers of studies one expected huge success and positive results originating from the US. It is thus incomprehensible that disadvantage and inequality remains hugely pervasive. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to assume that, even within the same contexts, universality of applicability of results are problematically inconclusive. Moreover, long term gains reflected in future citizenry aspirations of ECCD appear to be the political masquerading as the technical. As a default position, these foundational studies on children, and early childhood for that matter, assume and project potentialities for national gains through investment in the early years.

Flowing from this, it is apparent that a decoupling of practice is key, on the one hand, to focus on issues beneficial to children, without a conditional futuristic recourse and on the other hand, the required mutually inclusive and systematic approach to issues of inequality and poverty (inclusive of children too as they equally suffer those disadvantages). Moreover, the pervasive human capital argument coupled with the economics of early intervention; hedging of costs of current expenditures on early childhood as investments to be recouped in the future, is prospectively flawed. The enduring *what ifs* – if such calculations are not met – is disingenuously highhanded as an approach to accounting for childhood,

in any society. This results in a trend to commercially objectify children defeating the purpose of provision if the strategic intent was to alleviate poverty.

In sum, the three US studies (PPP, Abecedarian and Chicago CPC) while foundational in the early years sector are not without contentions. Foremost among them are the continuing contextual relevance issues; as are the claims of Western attempts to create a hegemony – in privileging particular knowledges thus obfuscating other worldviews.

2.9.2 The United Kingdom: A European Longitudinal Study - the Effective Provision of Preschool Education (EPPE)

In the realm of developed world studies that have influenced sporadic writings on early childhood, the Effective Provision of Preschool Education (EPPE) project launched in 1997, is highlighted as the European answer to the already cited predominant US studies. Equally designed as a longitudinal study, the EPPE study saw itself as an ‘effectiveness study’. The aim therefore was to gauge the impact of provision on children’s social, behavioural and intellectual development. The EPPE project has been compared to other studies globally. With some researchers reporting impact in relation to positive future trajectories as a result of early childhood interventions (Melhuish 2004). The main characteristics of the EPPE included:

- EPPE was designed as a longitudinal study covering ages 3–7, with a nation-wide sample of 3000 children in 141 early childhood settings.
- The study considered background characteristics such as family, home environment, kind of preschool attended.
- As an effectiveness study, the aim of the twelve (12) case studies was to intensively gauge the effects of individual preschools on the children who attended.

- As a direct result of the above, to be able to trace the effects of pre-school intervention (ages 3 and 4) at primary school enrolment (at age 5) and further effects measured at Years 1 and 2 (when children are at ages 6 and 7).
- The EPPE project has had continuing extensions, longitudinally, beyond ages 3 and 7; later 3–11; and now 3–16+

Major Findings

The EPPE study has been highlighted as one of the most successful longitudinal studies in the field of early childhood education; with commendation of having applied sound methodology to seeking results. It highlighted the value of seeking explications of global practice, within context; by exploring particularity – using case studies. As a mark of its strength, the EPPE study is mostly cited as providing the evidence basis for ECCD policy, within the United Kingdom and elsewhere. Findings from the EPPE straddled areas such as the impact of attending preschool (versus not attending); lasting effects; the duration of exposure; the home learning environment; as well as vulnerable children. It is important to distinguish findings made at primary school entry from those that were observed as effects in preschool. The interest of this doctoral research on early childhood education does not extend beyond early primary (at age 8 years).

- The EPPE found that preschool attendance positively affected all-round development in children, especially their social/behavioural and intellectual development;
- Equally, there were significant benefits of attendance to disadvantaged children, in high quality provisions with other children from diverse backgrounds;
- The EPPE study found a causal relationship between highly qualified staff and quality of provision and practice;

- On the home front, the quality of home learning was found to be more important for children's development, when compared to other social indicators affecting children;
- Some of these effects had less impact at primary school entry. At age 7, for example, while effects of attendance to preschool was evident, the relationship between quality and academic attainment was weaker;
- The EPPE's special educational needs (SEN) sample (2.3% of whom were on full statement) showed that multiple disadvantage had persistent negative effects on children up to Key Stage (KS) 1; with reduced impact of English as an Additional Language (EAL) at age 7, relative to ages 3 and 5;
- The sound effects of the EPPE has resulted in continuing extensions beyond its original remit. The earlier extension beyond ages 3 and 7 to cover ages 7–11 has subsequently covered the Effective Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education Project (EPPSE 3–16+); thus, extending the EPPE target population to age 16+ (Sylva et al. 2004).

2.9.3 The Developing World Context Literature (Majority World)

For this doctoral research, the quest is to highlight the disjunctive relationship between the global phenomenon of ECCD and its contextual relevance to majority world contexts. In reviewing the literature, the selection and analyses, have all sought to realise this abiding goal of the research. The foregoing review has been an attempt to define the contours of developed world studies that have dominated the landscape of early childhood education. This section addresses itself to the literature from the developing world: with a view to poignantly point to the domineering character of developed world knowledge products. A recent systematic review of the literature by the EPPI Centre – on early childhood development and cognitive development in the developing world – revealed the paucity of context-based literature within the developing world. Statistically, out of the 253 studies, 56% (142 of the studies took place in 20 countries in the developed world); compared to 111 studies that met the criteria in the majority world.

Similar challenges, such as the foregoing point, heralded the hybrid approach adopted by this study in the search and review of the literature. Most of the literature eventually included – in appearing to satisfy contextual relevance – tend to be rooted elsewhere in the developed world. These tendencies, as highlighted in the characterisation of the selected literature earlier, further accentuate the global–local epistemic divide. All these complicate and disrupt the developed world’s approach to globalising practices such as ECCD; with common effects such as a contextualisation of childhoods and children’s realities.

2.9.3.1 The UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Reports

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has been active in the field of education, since its formation in 1945. Upon the successful birth of the Education for All (EFA) movement, in the wake of the Dakar Forum in 2000 (from a momentum built up at Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990), the UNESCO has become actively engaged with issues affecting early childhood education. This reflected on the consequent agreements on the six goals; with early childhood as the number one goal for the EFA movement. In its monitoring role, the UNESCO has published annual reports to celebrate and highlight progress in its ‘Global Monitoring Reports’ (GMR), since 2002. Due to the global standing of the UNESCO, and its particular dedication of the 2007 GMR to early childhood across the globe; coupled with the dearth of developing world context-specific literature, the lens of the review will now focus on this Report with concentration on the developing world issues raised.

For nations in the developing world, the advent of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) proved a turning point in the insertion of the endemic issues afflicting their respective nations. Among such issues were poverty, hunger, illiteracy, water, disease and women empowerment; now mainstreamed as collective global challenges (UN 2015). Disregarding the global governance ambitions of such indicators for global progress, the MDGs (and now the Sustainable Development Goals – SDGs) have become the major referent in policy documents in the developing world. As a member of the global community of nations, Ghana is no

exception: most initiatives are benchmarked to MDG indicators and targeted timelines. In terms of such global aspirations, the EFA is matched to the MDGs: the education-related elements highlight their significance to children and childhood. As a critical goal, the MDGs hope for a world with universal primary education; while the EFA dwells on quality basic education (with key emphasis on early childhood education). The two global initiatives mutually reinforce each other. There is no doubting the critical role education, for example, plays in the attempts to mitigate the issues that have plagued the developing world and its collective impact on world development and progress.

As far as the goals of both the EFA and the MDGs, as set out below, the intent as evident is to address the issues that foster disadvantage and inequalities across the globe. On the advent of the target year for the MDGs (2015), the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon (2015: 3) remarked in a *Foreword* to the 2015 Report that:

The MDGs helped to lift more than one billion people out of extreme poverty, to make inroads against hunger, to enable more girls to attend school than ever before and to protect our planet. They generated new and innovative partnerships, galvanized public opinion and showed the immense value of setting ambitious goals. By putting people and their immediate needs at the forefront, the MDGs reshaped decision-making in developed and developing countries alike.

The Education For All (EFA) Goals	The Millennium Development (MDGs) Goals
<p>Goal 1 Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.</p> <p>Goal 2 Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.</p> <p>Goal 3 Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.</p> <p>Goal 4 Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.</p> <p>Goal 5 Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.</p> <p>Goal 6 Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.</p>	<p>Goal 1 Eradicate Extreme Hunger and Poverty</p> <p>Goal 2 Achieve Universal Primary Education</p> <p>Goal 3 Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women</p> <p>Goal 4 Reduce Child Mortality</p> <p>Goal 5 Improve Maternal Health</p> <p>Goal 6 Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases</p> <p>Goal 7 Ensure Environmental Sustainability</p> <p>Goal 8 Develop a Global Partnership for Development (Superseded by SDGs)</p>

Table 3.1 The EFA Goals and the MDGs

From the foregoing analysis, the situation of children in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), despite these ambitious targets, show that the region remains with these challenges; for example, on its education targets, among other indicators. Of the 57 million non-enrolled children globally, 33 million of them live in SSA. According to the UN, the globally agreed threshold of 97 percent, that define universal enrolment, have either been met or near achievement in all regions of the world except SSA (UN 2015: 25).

With increasing world attention on the early years, the focus of the 2007 GMR of UNESCO on early childhood care and education (Goal 1 of the EFA Six goals) deserve further interrogation. It is instructive to point out that the year 2015 was set as the target for meeting these goals. As wide-ranging as the definitions and coverage of ECCE are, the emphases of this report (GMR 2007) have been equally broad in its reach. This means that the 'holistic' approach to defining ECCE warrants understanding of all contexts to policy, provision and practice. To this extent the 2007 GMR – entitled 'Strong Foundations' – takes a comprehensive approach to assessing the global issues, that disadvantage and cause negative developmental trajectories for children. It is the intention of this study to concentrate attention on EFA Goal 1 – expanding and improving early childhood care and education – therefore, references to the other goals (within the MDGs or EFA) only arise due to interconnectivity aimed at achieving Goal 1.

2.9.3.2 The 2007 Global Monitoring Report: Global Trends in ECCE

The effort at expanding and improving early childhood care and education, as set out in EFA Goal 1, especially for the poor and disadvantaged, could almost be said to be speaking to the developing world. The earlier promulgation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC 1989), had already focussed world attention on the plight of all children, in both the developed and developing parts of the world. With active clauses to empower and highlight children's place in society, attempts have been made to both locate and educate children to realise these potentials. With increasing understandings of the role of

learning in the early years, ECCE has become the conduit and the domain for realising these goals. Specifically, on the situation of children in the developing world, the UNESCO GMR of 2007 reports thus:

A child born in the developing world has a four out of ten chance of living in extreme poverty, defined as living on less than US\$1 a day. An estimated 10.5 million children died in 2005 before they reached age 5, most from preventable diseases and in countries that have experienced major armed conflict since 1999. AIDS has orphaned more than 15 million children under age 18, 80% of them in sub-Saharan Africa. The rights of millions of children are violated by trafficking, labour, abuse and neglect. Finally, many of the 50 million children whose births are not registered each year are unable to access basic services or schooling as a result.

The UNESCO EFA Goals, on the face of the above, regard highly the mitigation and improvement of poverty and global inequalities that disadvantage children – with early childhood being the panacea for arresting these global challenges. In part, this helps to explain the holistic approach focus of ECCE, as defined internationally: to include health, nutrition, hygiene and children's cognitive development and socioemotional well-being. The statistics on the ECCE front equally beckon concern and attention, especially among countries in SSA. While enrolments are said to have improved in the 1990s, figures for developing countries point to marginal progress relative to those in the developed parts of the world. With an 80% indicative target, by 2015, the EFA GMR projections for sub-Saharan Africa was a Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of 21%. This is deemed an improvement from 11% (2000), 12.4% (2004) to 20% (2012). By 2012, only four countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Ghana, Seychelles, Mauritius and Angola), were said to be on target for achieving the GER of 80% by 2015.

It is important to reflect on the reasons for the lack of progress on ECCE in the developing world. Most of the countries in the SSA region have a high dependency on aid from the Western countries, and yet there is very little funding domestically that goes into education from the national budgets. Therefore, caught in the

quagmire of lack of donor interest in pre-primary – as ECCE has receded on the global priority list – and lower expenditure (as a percentage of the Gross National Product – GNP) on education by governments, ECCE has become even more disadvantaged. The characteristic dominance of ECCE provision by the private sector in the developing world, largely to exploit the gap in investment, further disadvantage the vulnerable who needed such services most. Practically, from the data and the literature, most private ECCD services tend to locate within highly populated urban places. The reason for this is not far-fetched; mainly, to cash in on working parents with often higher earnings than those in rural locations. The rural poor and disadvantaged are left to free-range and thus remain unaccounted for within the formal sectors. With a budgetary target of between 4–6% going to education, almost a third of all poor and low-income countries are still unable to meet the 4% spending target. On the donor funding front, the UNESCO has asserted that, of the global donor support that goes to education less than 10% of the donor funding targets pre-primary, with over half of donors allocating a mere 2% to ECCE.

With the onset of the target year (2015) for achieving the six EFA Goals, UNESCO puts the global score at achieving EFA Goal 1 at 47%. Although, with the figure for sub-Saharan Africa at 20%, coded as ‘very far from goal’, this is still regarded as a success, considering the state of enrolment pre-EFA; with a global enrolment at 184 million into ECCE, in 2012. UNESCO has reflected on these, not negatively (as in goals not met), but progressively looking post-2015 to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While not abandoning ECCE as the priority, recommendations have taken a modest and revisionist tone, relative to the ambitious targets set in the 2000 EFA Dakar Framework. This study, in being emphatic about contextual and cultural circumstances of the developing world, in a sense, sees the revisionism as a capitulation to those lived realities. UNESCO recommends the following actions, on ECCD among others, that post-2015 deserve attention globally:

1. Expansion on pre-primary enrolment must reach the hard-to-reach, marginalised and all children.

2. Improved data on children, especially all aspects of early childhood care and education
3. If all fails, at least one-year compulsory pre-primary education, as a universal target for all children

To sum up, the 2007 GMR met the criteria for inclusion in part, arising out of the lamentable state of existing literature on ECCD in the developing world. In the 2014 EPPI-Centre systematic review of ECD and cognitive development literature, an approximate 5% (12 studies of the 253) met the inclusion criteria from Africa: the percentage for the developing world stood at 44% (Rao et al. 2014). The partial exception is the ‘Young Lives’ study covering Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam. As the closest comparative study – set in a developing world context – to those in the West, attention will now shift to a discussion of the Young Lives international study. It is worth stating that its main focus is not on early childhood but on the life phase, inclusive of the early years through young adulthood; with significant findings that demonstrate strong connections between the early years and later adult outcomes. The Young Lives research add credence to the claim of foreign origins of the few literatures from the majority world contexts.

2.9.3.3 The Young Lives International Study

The Young Lives research project is a collaboration between a team based at the Department for International Development, University of Oxford (in the UK) and partner countries, non-governmental organisations, governments, and academic institutions. The study’s core concern is with child poverty covering the countries of India (the States of Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana), Ethiopia, Peru and Vietnam. The researchers have articulated a desire to affect the live trajectories of their participants – postulating a ‘theory of change’ to amplify the impact of the data generated – through a continuous process of research and long-term policy engagement. More specifically, they have been following how later outcomes implicate earlier childhood circumstances (Young Lives ‘Theory of Change’ June

2015). The features that defined the Young Lives study, among others, are as follows:

- Young Lives is a longitudinal study following a dual cohort of about 12,000 children.
- In each country, 2000 children born in the years 2001–2002 (younger cohort) and 1000 children born in 1994–1995 (older cohort) were selected.
- The study spans a period of fifteen (15) years capturing data on early childhood, adolescence through young adulthood via household surveys, case studies, in-depth interviews, and group work.
- The design is to have four rounds of data collection from the four countries: in the older cohort at ages 8, 12, 15, 19, and 22, and among the younger cohort at ages 1, 5, 8, 12, and 15.
- The study tracks child poverty and changes overtime in relation to education, health, nutrition, psychosocial developmental paths, migration, aspirations and personal histories.

Major Findings

The Young Lives cohort study, at the core of its philosophy, intends to impact on policy in lower middle-income countries (LMICs), facing rapid economic and social change. It is focussed on offering an evidence basis for policies that foster change to child poverty. The data collection rounds, and preliminary reports, took place in 2002, 2006, 2009, 2013, and finally 2016. Preliminary reports were done under the headings of ‘Education and Learning’; ‘Growth and Nutrition’; and ‘Youth and Development’, on a country-by-country basis. Within the remit of this doctoral research, the spotlight will be on aspects of the findings that highlight childhood education and learning. In particular, there is a growing emphasis on schooling, as a surety for children in developing countries to climb up a ladder of advantage and opportunity. Some researchers have asserted the ascendancy, expansion, and

centrality of schooling, during the early childhood phase of life (Bourdillon and Boyden 2013).

2.9.4 Bridging the Epistemic Gap between Minority and Majority Worlds: A Transactional Model

There is growing popularity for explaining away the challenges alluded to in the foregoing reviews of studies – from the developed and developing world contexts – using theories grounded in world systems or cultures, suggestive of a world policy. To restate an earlier point, the justifications made for the practice of ECCD in Ghana often emanate from sources foreign to the context. This disjunctive stance creates a natural chasm between the global phenomenon of ECCD and local contexts of practice.

The ensuing arguments by world culture theorists suggest that there is increasing isomorphism in discourses and institutions that it is almost superfluous to devote energies at unpacking such issues that cause disjunctions. Such is the predicament of developing world contexts as seen in the example of Ghana. To wit, the positioning of the phenomenon in the context, takes on a local meaning – still retaining a global outlook – thus rationalising the issues that cause the seeming divergence. Writing in the tradition of world culture theory, Kathryn Andersen-Levitt (2010) – *Global Schooling Local Meaning* – puts the argument, based on evidence from a range of global settings and contexts, that meaning is all that matters; and meaning is both local and contextual. On his part Gibson-Graham (2003: 50) considers the constrained space and capacity for the local thus:

There are afoot in the world today concerted efforts to produce global integration: The World Trade Organisation, the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, International Monetary Fund Structural Adjustment Programmes – tethering individual societies to a global capitalist economy... Critics have pointed to the violence inherent in

such projects and the manifold erasures and suppressions that are enacted in their pursuit.

Quite understandably, to apply a world culture or systems analysis to ECCD would require a semblance of Barad's (2010) idea of an 'intra-action'. By this, the suggestion would be that contexts such as Ghana insofar as they are not insular in their existence are naturally implicated in global actions. Therefore, the attempt to practice a global phenomenon require that local contexts engage invading precepts in mutually reproductive ways. In the end such local domains engage in meaning attributions to explicate local ECCD praxis; in fitting with their contextual circumstances. In essence, this offers another rationale for the application of a hybrid process in the selection and review of the literature: to assist with clarifying the unclear boundaries between phenomenon and context. It is instructive, however, that this process of fusion of knowledges while a strength of this study equally points to a major limitation in the contextual relevance of the extant literature.

PART II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.10 Introduction

It is a crucial part of research work to encompass a thorough review of the literature of the area under study or research. Even more important is the role that a review of the literature plays in a qualitative study in education. In an attempt to highlight its significance, Paul Oliver caricatures the literature review as the ‘concrete foundation’ upon which a bricklayer then proceeds to construct a solid structure or building (Oliver 2012:1). According to Mac Naughton and Rolfe (2010), as a rationale for its place within research, a literature review aims broadly at three important aspects of the research: 1) familiarity with what is already known about the area of study; 2) assist with the generation of the research question or problem, based on what is known already; 3) and finally, help to inform a choice of research design for the study to happen. As a challenge, however, paucity of culture-specific literature has proved a challenge at various points in this research. As a default for the progression of this study the literature review assumed a hybrid model. This broadened the literature, thus, encompassing cross-cultural and apparent epistemic oppositional positions among the global and the local (understood here as minority/majority worlds).

2.11 Definitions

According to Mukherji and Albon, the literature review is ‘a critical analysis of related literature in a relevant field to that of the research being undertaken’ (Mukherji & Albon 2010: 201). To this, Hart (1998) adds the critical element of thoroughness. As a process it involves ‘gathering information through reading, understanding it, selecting and representing it in your review, and analysing, synthesising, evaluating and creating a new text from all these activities’ (Badenhorst 2008:155).

In terms of its positioning, the literature review is a critical component of a doctoral thesis. Badenhorst (2008:155) affirms that within the ‘academic context, all research is based on previous research’. Dahl (2010: 154) contends that researching generally is about ‘acknowledging that academics and our concepts are always already part of networks and not outside of them’. As far as the typology of this literature review; this study adopted the traditional method. This is defined by Cronin *et al* (2008: 38–39) as narratives that selectively ‘critique and summarise’ literature relevant to the area of study. As an aim, it is targeted at offering a snapshot of what is known, gaps identified and where future research may be pitched. Other typologies such as systematic review to provide the most comprehensive and up-to-date list of what is known; as well as qualitative meta-synthesis or meta-analysis aimed to quantitatively (by statistical data) deduce findings and patterns, did not appear suitable for this type of study. In terms of how much literature was required, as much a review as was sufficient to address the RQs was what this research defaulted to. In fact, the same attitudes applied to the empirical data collection; where data were sought to satisfactorily find answers to the RQs of the study.

To sum up, Cronin *et al* (2008: 39) offer a rubric for the successful conduct of a literature review: Selecting a review topic; searching the literature; gathering, reading and analysing the literature; writing the review; and organising the references.

2.12 The Literature Review and the Empirical Data

In the tradition of interpretive qualitative research, the literature review plays a crucial role. Miller (1997: 3) intimates that ‘qualitative research is an empirical enterprise’. As evident in the ensuing section of this chapter, the themes that came out of the fieldwork were initially gauged from the pre-fieldwork encounter with the literature. In the essential quest for contextual relevance, secondary sources (from the literature review) proved insufficient, requiring primary data from the contexts of study. Thus, the themes as constituted now reflect both the theoretical and empirical; based upon further insights gained from the fieldwork.

2.12.1 Themes from the Empirical and Theoretical Literature

As an approach to discussing the literature, a thematic model emerged – almost naturally – as a result of the plethora of issues that early childhood care and development (ECCD) heralds. The resultant themes are a product of the generative processes that characterised the relationship between the data from the literature, as well as data from the empirical fieldwork. With the emergence of the RQs it appears that the variables that required further exploration had been delimited. From the analysis of the empirical data and emergent themes from the codes; it became imperative that the study reverts to the original precepts (the RQs) that informed the research. This attempt to reconcile the research questions with the themes significantly progresses the study in terms of the data to be analysed at a later chapter. Among them themes are: *Childhood and Early Childhood, Developmentalism and Developmentally Appropriate Practice, School Starts, Schooling and Education, Readiness, Resilience and Transitions, Cultural Appropriateness, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Pedagogy and the Curriculum, ECCD Policy, Cost, Benefits and Quality, Colonialism and the New Globalism, Poverty and Childhoods, and Educational Theories.*

Early Childhood

This study, in defaulting to a choice of terminology (namely ECCD), also contests the nomenclature portrayed in the prefixes/suffixes – *Early, Care, Education, Development* – that accompany ‘*Childhood*’, as they often insinuate status and power (MacNaughton 2005). These status connotations hold relevance, as hierarchies are a natural variable in the discussion of early childhood issues. These globally inform the sorts of deportments and attitudes that characterise the conceptualisation of childhood in local contexts. In a review of the literature, it was evident that in most cultures across the globe, childhood is dedicated to growth – in enculturation and acculturation as well as in knowledge and skills acquisition. The exposure to education and schooling is a direct consequence of this: with prescriptions on what the ideal learning model for childhood is. Early childhood then becomes a contentious terrain, with dictates from adults on the best definitions of how growth and the deemed maturation is achieved. Suffice it to remark, here, that the current

‘use it or lose it’ (Waldfogel 2008: 583) tropes on what constitutes a ‘truthful’ ECCD model appear enforced. Some writers regard some agencies of the United Nations, the World Bank, and the IMF among others as fuelling a particularistic view of childhood – with an agenda to globalise that worldview (Penn 2010). This particular view of a global child, within early childhood, has achieved mainstream status universally.

Regarding the use of terminology in reference to the ‘early years’, this study proposes to use variously and almost interchangeably early childhood and the early years. The literature is replete with incarnations of this terminology – early childhood education, early childhood education and care, early childhood development and early childhood care and development. The preferred term in policy documents in Ghana is Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD). This is the reason the study has adopted the use of ECCD in this thesis. Among the rationales for this research, such ‘status’ connotations conveyed by uses of the term, deserve further interrogation. Significantly, when it comes to children and childhood, some terminology convey a sense of power, control and patronage. This is borne out of the accompaniments to ‘childhood’: mostly conveying a ‘minority status’, ‘immaturity’, ‘teleological’, ‘futurity’, ‘becoming’ and ‘transitive’; depending on the choice of ‘pre/suffix’ to childhood. These are somewhat suggestive of incompleteness, without the accompaniments of ‘early’, ‘education’, as well as ‘care’ and ‘development’ (James and Prout 1990; Dunne 2008; Alison 2009; Woodhead 2009). In some guise, the mixings of pre/suffixes tend to be suggestive of the typologies of childhood conceptualisations and choice of early years praxis.

Dunne (2008) offers a dichotomised summation of the discourse on how childhood ought to be perceived and understood. The pro-developmentalists – largely Piagetian – promote a ‘privative discourse’ of certain essential ‘lacks’ or deficits; involving ‘humanly worthwhile qualities’ not yet possessed; and a telos-driven discourse of tying learning to development, inexorably and chronologically engendering an upward progression during childhood. On the other hand, in the privileged constructions; childhood is not synonymous with the deficits conveyed in the ‘privative’ sphere, rather the child is imbued with ‘positive qualities all too easily lost in the passage to adult life’ (Dunne 2008: 261). Such constructions often

reflect adult ‘priorities’ and ‘projections’; a romanticised, yet mythically, nostalgic view (ibid: 266) – an obsession which is scant on the welfare of children ‘apart from the damage it could cause them’ (Gillis cited in Dunne 2008: 266)

On the global front, there is equally no agreement on a uniform terminology: most constructions are pervasively educational. ECCD is essentially perceived as an educational programme and thus its abode fits structurally within schools. To this end, the close-siting of ECCD to schools is both deliberate and instructive. In time schooling becomes the dominant feature associated with children and childhood. Conceptually, the school as a formal institutional structure, assists with the total governance and accountability for childhood. Prout (2005: 141) asserts that ‘schooling in rich countries is a central means by which children are sorted and distributed into systems of social rewards. Similar views inform the idea in the developing world that schools offer the central location for exposure to civilisation and development at the individual, community and social levels. With ECCD as the methodological beginning points to the child’s entry to the formal sector, it becomes unsurprising that most conceptualisations default to an educational rationale for early childhood education (Siraj-Blatchford 2009). Further emboldened by claims that education begins at birth, most common are models that seek understandings of childhood in the realm of pedagogy, curriculums and the emergent developments of children (ibid).

While the historical ideas and foundations of ECCD are ardently Western, practice in contemporary times are globally pervasive. Within Europe such ideas go back to the post-war institutionalisation of children. Some of the reviewed programmes across North America point to similar undercurrents with attempts in the US to mitigate the disruptions to the lives of children in its ‘War on Poverty’ (Kagan 2002; Belsky 2001). Other researchers (Woodhead 1990; Penn 2009; Maynard & Thomas 2009) go beyond the historical undergirds to practice, and stress that perceived successful outcomes and evidence of continued schooling from ex-pre-schoolers solidified the practice of ECCD across contexts. Still, there are doubters on the institutionalisation and formal character of current provision. Bruer (2004: 428) insists that research evidence points to the contrary:

Infants do not need highly specific carefully tailored experiences for this kind of species-typical development to occur...critical periods do not really speak to how we should design preschool ... choose toys, time music lessons, or establish early child care policies.

Contrarily, Waters (2012: 16) in 'Bureaucratizing the child' contends that the perceptual regard of the child, as the essential raw material (on the production lines) for schools, account for the educational accountability framework outlined above. By the same token, the paradoxical correlation at institutional levels between the corporate and state authorities cause a disarticulation. The innocent child falls in the trap between two giants: the state desirous of moulding civic conscious and responsible citizens; the corporate intent on a competent workforce to induce productivity and profit (Rose 1999; Moss 2001). Summarised effectively thus by Moss (2001: 84): 'the growing state interest in early childhood is not for young children per se, but as a means of preparation for school, for adulthood, and for paid work'. Within capitalist frameworks, such business-like tendencies as these, eventually account for the human capital arguments that dominate the provision of ECCD services globally. By this, economic arguments are suggested for the education of children, during the early years: thus, the sponsorship of the upbringing and training is effectively deemed an investment to be recouped, when the child, now adult, joins the labour market. Therefore, in spite of the best intentions of ECCD policy and EFA global prioritisation to affect the vulnerable and disadvantaged members of society; they remain the very groups that face egregious discrimination. In the end, the best interest of the child that have dominated global rhetoric emerges thus: 'On the school's assembly line, the state, teachers, businesses, parents, and others in position of authority define what the product will become' (Waters 2012: 17).

It is apparent from the foregoing that ECCD remains a contested phenomenon. While there is a perceived attempt to promote univocalism in the conceptualisation of childhood, via the essentialism of the global child; the ECCD terrain still rages on with growing divergence and heterogeneity in local representations. For proponents of the sociology of childhood, on their part, it is essentially conclusive that however constructed, childhood even if 'transitional' remain 'culturally

constructed’ (Woodhead 2009: 56). Therefore, in all these varied worldviews, it becomes apparent the need to foreground the locus of the protagonist in this debate – the child; whose local context, to all intents and purposes, must remain acutely meaningful.

As childhood materialises within certain socio-historical contexts, it is paramount that emergent conceptualisations reflect such environments. Ghana, with its adopted ECCD Policy, is caught within the swathes of global conceptions that characterise provision and practice, in the early years. Essentially, the local contextual circumstances (as presented in Chapter Four) point to childhoods that appear markedly, at variance, with Western-induced definitions. As shall be made evident, in not accounting for the myriad circumstances, deficits and challenges within indigenous contexts, the resultant conceptualisation of childhood becomes ill-aligned to the lived realities of such local contexts.

Developmentalism and the Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Most of the theoretical positions and theorising on early childhood education are steeped within developmentalist foundations (Moss 2001; Dahlberg Moss & Pence 2007; MacNaughton 2005). Glenda MacNaughton raises the ‘rooted’ and ‘settled status’ of stage theories – promoted within developmentalism – which appear to make them ‘right’, ‘best’ and ‘ethical’ (MacNaughton 2005: 1). By the same token, as a constitutive element of the notion of ‘Developmentally Appropriate Practice’ (DAP) (Bredekamp 1987), the very developmentalist assumptions that cause dissention among practitioners, researchers, and authors equally incriminate DAP.

Developmentalism has survived various generations: often traced to its conceptual base in Erikson’s (1950) eight stages in a child’s socio-psychological development. Subsequent understandings of the ecology to child development (Bronfenbrenner 1979) have assisted in shifting stark developmentalism. The immense influence that developmentalism exerts on current ECCD practice globally is astounding. Moss (2001: 93) while not dismissing developmental psychology comments on how much ‘crude developmentalism’ affects policies and provision of ECCD: ‘the idea

of the universal child, who follows biologically determined ages and stages'. This correlates with the attempt through developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) to harness child development to learning. According to its main proponents – the US National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) – DAP is equated to best practice in the early years (NAEYC 2009). The Association deems DAP a composite practice: with child development and all its essentials, such as learning and nurturing, all catered for to influence policy, provision and practice. The implication of DAP within developmentalism arises out of the tendency to follow a staged approach; with attention on the child's age chronology as a basis for what is offered through learning. With its huge dependence on research largely within the US context, DAP in its attempts to globalise its precepts has faced some criticisms.

Contextually, DAP's appropriateness implied in its universalisms of childhood and children's trajectories (Yelland *et al* 2006; Tisdall & Punch 2012; Weikart 1999; Katz 1999; Penn 2001) has been challenged. In the developing world, considering the dire statistics on education in SSA, chronicled local contextual challenges render concepts such as DAP a bit high-flown and incomprehensible. Helen Penn (2010: 305) highlights as almost 'laughable' recommendations of smaller adult-child ratios; in resource-challenged contexts such as those in SSA. Although, a prolific subject among researchers and writers, there is no agreement on DAP's appropriateness to majority world settings (Orkin, Abebe & Woodhead 2012; Woodhead 1996; Penn 1999; 2005; 2010; 2012; Nsamenang 1992; Garcia 2001; Garcia *et al* 2008; Imoh & Ame 2012; Pence *et al* 2006; Pence 2011; Boakye-Boateng 2010; Viruru 2001). Some reconceptualisations have occurred as a result, to acknowledge the place of culture and context – notions of 'Contextually Appropriate Practice' (Woodhead 1998); or 'Culturally Appropriate Practice' (Woodhead 1996) – with others looking beyond developmentalism, making references to 'postdevelopmentalism' (Walkerdine 1993: 451). The architects of DAP have not been left out in the revisions to accommodate culture and context: from its initial document in 1986, a revised protocol in 2006 (NAEYC 2009) has addressed itself to new understandings beyond developmentalism.

School Starts, Schooling and Education

In an OECD study, Caroline Sharp (2002) tackled the question of when (in terms of a chronological age) a child should start schooling? This is in the light of opposing research evidence on early starts and future educational trajectories (Stipek & Phillips 1993; Sylva & Wiltshire 1993; Schweinhart & Weikart 1993; Melhuish *et al* 2001). Commonly cited evidences largely emerge out of longitudinal studies: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Project; the EPPE study (Sylva *et al* 2004; Weikart 2000; Schweinhart & Weikart 1993; 1995; 1998). With the earlier elucidations on these studies, could these constitute a universal template, useable even within majority world contexts?

Schooling has remained the central locus for children: childhoods are structurally situated within the realms of schooling. In addition, and as contended earlier, this has almost assumed a conscriptive dimension. This could be explained at two levels: it is taken for granted that children are expected to stay in school as their structural location; and also, there is the assumption of certain purported benefits to children arising from being in school. This latter point maybe constitutes the point of conflation between schooling and education. Whereas it has been argued that the institutionalised and routinized character of schooling takes it away from the mundanity of the home, education as argued elsewhere originates, resonates and rebounds in the realms of the home and schools. Yet, there are prevalent attempts within ECCD practice not to account for the other-than-school factors. The disquiet regarding early starts to schooling probably arise out of these contentions. Practically, a certain level of transitory alienation occurs on a very frequent basis to the child, who perambulates between home and school. Also, ECCD practices in the contexts of the developing world delicately subsist on the tenuous connections various settings can muster, as justifications for their *localised* praxis. And finally, children of the pre-primary age, prior considerations are given to early enrolments without regard to any alternatives to schooling.

Readiness, Transitions, and Resilience

Are children ready, in spite of the good intentions conveyed in early enrolment into pre-compulsory schooling? ‘Readiness’ in early childhood education has a range of meaning depending on the context (Kagan 1990; Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) 2007; Woodhead *et al* 2008; Woodhead & Moss 2007). The different notions, to an extent, explain the apparent contradictory understandings, among ECCD stakeholders, on the role of pre-compulsory schooling (Broström 2006; Hanon & James 1990; van Moorst & Graham 1995). In this context then, *transitions* in early childhood become both an imperative ritual and a circumscribed process (Tilleczek 2012); with ‘complex, social and ecological trajectories that are not easily grasped, predicted or interpreted’ (ibid: 13). Similarly, other writers and researchers have put forward a range of views pertaining to *transitions* (Bernard 2004; Fabian & Dunlop 2006; Fortune-Woods 2006; Neuman 2006; Tilleczek 2012). Some imply process – as children, and life itself, are transition-prone; even teleological presupposing an end goal (Dunne 2008). Moreover, on the rituals of schooling, Neuman (2006: 11–12) distinguishes between ‘*vertical*’ and ‘*horizontal*’ transitions, which characterise children’s daily reality. The ‘pre-ordained’ and ‘coerced’ character (Fortune-Wood 2006: 135), as opposed to a self-determined and intrinsically motivated process requires a capacity (*resilience*) to absorb the disturbances of the *transition* process (Walker & Salt 2006; Tilleczek 2012).

In the context of this research, ‘*readiness*’ ‘*resilience*’ and ‘*transitions*’ are proposed as mutually reinforcing concepts. Broström (2006: 56; *also* Myers & Landers 1989: 3) adopts this conflation of *readiness* – in relation to *transitions* – in his distinction between ‘*child readiness*’ and ‘*school readiness*’. Claxton (2002) implicates resilience within learning, in *Building Learning Power*, with his emphasis on the ‘Four Rs’ – *Resilience, Resourcefulness, Reflection* and *Relationships*. Bernard (2004: 9–10) extends the understanding of *resilience* – as four overlapping categories: ‘social competence’; ‘problem-solving’; ‘autonomy’; and ‘sense of purpose’. In an attempted reconciliation of these differing stances, Sterling (2010) proposes a discourse ‘strong on process but contextual’; perhaps a way of foregrounding the context and the agency of children in the process.

Still, readiness – as a crucial underpinning to justifications for preschools and kindergartens – remains divergently pervasive in the field of early childhood education. This, despite the frantic efforts to progress a reconceptualised view of children and childhood endeavours as ends (sufficiency of the here and now – ‘being’) rather than some indeterminate futuristic (becoming) civic aspirations. The deficit model of viewing children, as yet incomplete in their current composition, along with constructions of these child-like efforts as remediation of these defects are problematic. The deferral of gratifications suggests an implausibility; as indigenous communities seek alternatives to schooling rather than wait in anticipation of long-held presumptive benefits of schooling.

To put readiness in the context of this study, a much bigger requirement is the question of contextual readiness. Granted that Western-driven ECCD models are the gold (global) standard; attempts to imitate in recipient contexts is an indictment and point to limitations within local contexts. My reflective diary while on fieldwork records my reflections on this:

On the use of the terms Preschool with Primary school attached: and Primary school with Preschool attached. The first connotes *growth* from preschool beginnings leading to an incorporated primary school: mostly a feature of private providers. This usually reflects a preparatory ethos and a readiness agenda. The second merely a feature of public schools: a pre-existing Primary school (P1–P6) merely adds-on a Preschool (most often just a Kindergarten for 4- and 5-year olds) to receive children for compulsory schooling at age 6. The second are regarded in my view as *afterthoughts*. Therefore, the developmental history and trajectory of each of these is often revelatory of its objective. Equally, such mundane and often taken-for-granted elements hold a lot of meaning in relation to the kind of provision and practice that takes place. (Researcher’s Reflective Diary 28/11/2014)

From the above, both *growth* and *afterthought* preschools raise both transitional and contextual readiness issues. Growth preschools often contend with incremental adjustments in their development: in accepting a joined up Primary often on the same site which ends up in a standardised format and framing preschool in a preparatory existence. Afterthought schools face an even more challenging prospect. While upfront on its preparatory ethos, they neither satisfy the mass of children to progress to the public primary school nor provide the accommodating transition that growth schools show affordances for. In the end, readiness provides both justifiable reasons for the existence of preschools; while at the same time most reject and critique preschools justifiably for this reason.

Pedagogy and the Curriculum

Pedagogies, as the overriding art and teaching philosophy, along with eventual constructed curriculum, insofar as they associate with education, are neither politically-neutral nor innocent. The positions taken on whether to regard adults working within centres as ‘teachers’; or even have a documented learning programme (as a curriculum), highlight inherent tensions in the field of early childhood. Early childhood pedagogy and curriculum embody a contentious terrain among writers, researchers, and practitioners within the domain of early childhood (Siraj-Blatchford et al 2002; Morrison 2001; Woodhead 2006; Caldwell 1989; Rinaldi 2006; Jensen, Broström & Hansen 2010; Broström 2006; Illich 1971; Vygotsky 1978; Taguchi 2010; Karalis 2009; Kessler & Swadener 1992). As educational tools alongside schools, they constitute the terrain where the lives of children are ‘intensively governed’ (Rose 1999 cited in Moss 2001: 82). Here, childhood becomes entangled in a politically potent agenda: one that sets children up as the ‘destiny of the nation’ (ibid); even ‘help strengthen social equity’ as a goal desired by the OECD (2002: 10); as well as the ubiquitous future citizenry aspirations (GoG Children’s Act 560 1998). Jensen *et al* (2010) resent these *political* attempts masquerading as the *technical*. There is the perception that pre-compulsory schooling as part of the ‘educational continuum’ engenders and nourishes misplaced attitudes to its role and relationship to learning (Karalis 2009: 70).

Essentially, pedagogical considerations are fraught with and are strikingly political. The nature and identity of the future responsible citizen; as well as the resourceful and productive member of the workforce, all emerge out of the interaction between learners, pedagogy, and schools (Lauder & Porter 2009: 3). Pedagogy, and education, generally presuppose an attempt to impart certain values: they both offer the cultural tools and serve to facilitate the nurturing and upbringing of the future responsible and productive adult (Lauder & Porter 2009; Bloom 1997). As far as the remit of this study and the empirical experiences, the claim of disarticulation arises partly due to the incapacity of Ghana to infuse existing pedagogies with its socio-cultural values.

Equally, for this research, the question of *what* curriculum is allied to the critical question of *why* a curriculum for early childhood in the Ghanaian educational context? A look at the preschool curriculum (ages 4 to 6 Kindergarten) in Ghana, appear to show scant regard for the context of children (as explained in Chapter Four). The curriculum is replete with developmentalist positions; with learning programmes calibrated chronologically – ages and stages – along with standardised subjects demanding mastery of the programmed learning activities. Considering that ECCD is conceptualised as new to the Ghanaian context; and the unsettled contentions surrounding contextual relevance; a further complication with standardised curriculum for a little comprehended programme further heightens the disarticulations afflicting global–local dynamics.

Cultural Influences

Eldering and Leseman propose an understanding of culture and research studies on culture along a continuum: on one end is ‘cultural relativism’; on the other end ‘behavioural universalism’ (Eldering and Leseman 1999 cited in Sylva et al. 2010: 297). The former views culture as intertwined with behaviour and thus inseparable; the latter, promotes a universalist view – ‘same behaviour traits and patterns appear in children wherever they are’. The division portrays culture as a crucial influencing factor in human interactions; therefore, behaviour is only explicable within the context of ‘given cultural populations’ (ibid: 297). The simplistic understanding – a

way of doing things – gain nuanced meanings when applied to real-life contexts. In their studies in East Africa, LeVine *et al* surmised that culture was widely perceived as ‘bounded and static’. Culture summed up thus, ‘this tribe has adopted these ways of behaving, that tribe does it differently’ (LeVine et al. cited in Penn 2010: 298).

Nowhere is the quest to establish context more relevant than in the domain of culture: people and the countries they inhabit are different and do things differently. This is, by no means, straightforward considering that culture by its nature is ‘forever assembled, dismantled, and reassembled’ (Wolf 1997: 391). This transformative and dynamic feature of culture has implied that many inhabit ‘cultural borderlands’ (Rosaldo 1989 cited in Penn 2010: 300). Such explications of culture incite a quest for clarity between phenomenon and context: the mutual particularity sought in culture and context collectively offer meaning – as outside the realms of culture and context the individual is bereft of meaning and purpose (Penn 2010; Resnick et al 1996; Bronfenbrenner 1979). As has been elucidated, childhoods are effectively meaningful within given cultural contexts. Regardless of variations, across regions of the country, there are always opportunities to incorporate local cultures; effectively rendering ECCD practice both local and meaningful.

ECCD Policy

While early childhood has always been catered and accounted for, variously across the globe depending on the particular culture, early childhood care and development – in its current calibrations portend a new phenomenon – and its policy derivatives are essentially novel. In Ghana, the context and empirical focus of this study, the old practice of caring for pre-primary aged children, is traced to colonial times: the policy formulations however, are a recent development – current policy enacted in 2004, by the Government of Ghana (ECCD Government of Ghana Policy 2004). The contemporaneous nature of policy formulations are evident in the evaluations of such policies by the prevailing literature –the majority of which is a twenty-first century phenomenon. Evidence abound in the revisions to national childhood charters and new legislations or Children’s Acts, globally. The

debate is unceasing among authorities in the field of early childhood care and development. In all cases, however, the essence of policy has to be addressed to a context. Such context dependency when considered in policy, counter the prevalent universalisms that promote ideas of a monolithic global childhood. Western developmental appropriateness tends to serve as the template, with rampant mimicking of such model practices foreign to majority world contexts.

Moreover, there is a school of thought emphatic on the imperative of evidence-based policy. This is increasingly seen as the most scientific basis for what works – offering ‘unimpeachable methodology, promising to deliver unarguable results’ (Welch in Proctor et al. 2015: 63). These stances beckon their own inherent propositional contradictions. Evidence basis, in essence, is classified as the stratagem that dwell on *what works*; begging the question of whether there ought to be context basis for what works rather than a certain universal and celestial episteme broadcast to the rest of the world; often as best practice.

On the contradictory positions, the basis for evidence-based policy, it is suggested, are based on two pillars. The first are the evaluative exercises made of empirical findings from studies. And the second being undergirds to the very policy formulations that legitimate it (Marston and Watts 2003; Welch 2015). Some of the foundational studies (the High/Scope PPP; Abecedarian; Chicago CPC; EPPE; and the EPPI-Centre) discussed earlier in this chapter, have been said to provide the evidence basis for policies in early childhood care and development policy. As has been made clear, such evidences are only the beginning of the debate on their sufficiency as tools to legitimise and ennoble such policies. Philosophically, there is an underlying epistemological consideration that drives the hankering for a specificity in the way policy is couched and the means of evaluation of such policies. There appears to be a univocalist position targeted at seeking a certain truth evident in the preponderant use of Randomised Control Trials (RCT), for example. Stances of this sort bring forth divergence that render deficient any claims to a gold standard for evidence: a more disaggregated basis for deciding on what works engender potentialities that consider contexts, circumstances and relevance (Pence and Hix-Small 2007).

Poverty and Children

Poverty is generally defined as the disadvantages and inequalities that prevent and negatively affect good livelihoods and happiness. In the main, the approach in the literature on early childhood, is usually to conflate poverty with the opportunities that schooling, and education presents as a mitigation (Penn 2001; Garcia et al. 2008; Boyden and Bourdillon 2012). The debate on the issue of poverty fits within the important questions this research is attempting to answer: the implication of the developed world in the lives of majority world children. The ‘Young Lives’ study covering some Lower Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) – India (States of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana), Peru, Vietnam, and Ethiopia – is one such influential study, set within a developing world context with a view to positively impacting the life chances of children. Beyond the generational issue that lead to data obsolescence – a criticism of most longitudinal studies – researching the developing world context without an emancipatory and advocacy rationale, appear to result in narratives that are deemed incomplete (Nsamenang 2009; Penn 2001).

Furthermore, it is the reality that majority of developing world children live and grow in poverty along with its attendant record of suffering which ultimately define their pathways in life (Nsamenang 2009; Boyden and Bourdillon 2012; Engle and Black 2008; Penn 2001). The alternatives that throw children the mirage of embracing ECCD programmes to lift them out of poverty and climb up a ladder of opportunity and advantage, have proved even more contentious (Penn 2010; Orkin et al 2012). The various US longitudinal studies drew on samples from the disadvantaged in the society with findings of long-term positive benefits and outcomes for poor children in the treatment groups. These have become established justifications for the promotion of preschool attendance.

Insofar as the effects of poverty on early childhood, there are varied positions among researchers: while some see a link between poverty and education and development; others question the concreteness of education in its ability to mitigate inequality and disadvantage (Boyden & Bourdillon 2012). Patrice Engle (2012: 130) points to a ‘developmental potential’ with a ‘zone of modifiability’ to explain the relationship. It is implied by this that there is a range ‘within which a child may

develop given limitations of his or her genetic characteristics'. Wachs (2012: 152) in agreeing with certain developmental risk factors – for example malnutrition, disease, illiteracy – positively offer suggestions of 'promotive influences' (good parenting, parental education, medicine, nutrition, secure attachment and self-cognition among others). The conclusion thereof is that poverty impacts child development and competence in three-related ways. Firstly, there is increased risk of exposure to risk factors – biological, psychosocial and individual contexts. Second, poverty limits the 'protective factors' (Engle 2012: 135) or compromises opportunities to enjoy 'promotive factors' (Wachs 2012: 158).

On education and poverty, the final inter-related point is the adverse effects that children suffer, which ultimately impact both the 'neural' and 'behavioural' spheres. Thus, resulting in certain consequential effects on the child's 'brain function and development' (Wachs 2012: 158). On the basis of such robust analysis, equations have been made with holistic ECCD as a strategy for poverty alleviation. This has been pitched widely by global actors such as the World Bank and the UN, intent on strategically focussing minds on developing the whole child. This latter point takes into consideration the promotion of a holistic and integrated ECCD framework, as a feature of the global early childhood education template.

Colonial Infrastructure and the New Globalism

The understanding of 'globalisation' in former European colonies does not convey a newness ascribed to the current tide of global interactions; that non-colonised people conceive it to be. For former colonies, the contemporaneous meanings of globalisation, and predilection of the mass of the literature to describe it in such novel ways – as a new currency – appear naturally provocative. The lack of comprehension of the predicament of colonised people, along with the confusion that globalisation is new and constitutes a benignly contemporary equivalence of a civilising force, partly explains this. This argument is poignant in many ways; it explicates the vulnerabilities that define third-world contexts, in their interactions with the rest of the world. Ng and Mirchandani (2008) in their methodological attempt to link global trends to local lives, cite a phenomenon of global/superior–local/inferior binary. In support of this position, Gibson-Graham (2002: 30) asserts

that ‘the global is represented as sufficient, whole, powerful and transformative in relation to which the local is deficient, fragmented, weak and acted upon’. It is not new, this donor–recipient relationship between the developing world and the developed world. What globalisation has done is to complicate the gradations in the relationships among the global and the local; especially categorizations along developed and developing worlds. The resultant phenomena have led to the increasing isomorphism among extremely diverse contexts; and at the same time blurring of the binaries. According to Prout (2005: 18) such fuzziness and isomorphism render explications along these binaries plainly crude; especially in the wake of an emerging ‘complex, volatile, and unpredictable’ global economy.

Alatas’ (2006) analysis of this phenomenon draws on ‘academic dependency theory’. The suggestion is that Third World systems are conditioned, via a labyrinth of complexities, structures and unequal powers, to regard and depend on developed world contexts as *producers* of the essential knowledges. On the other hand, the developing world merely then become consumers, with little regard to relevance as such knowledges interact with the context. This has some effect on the development of such knowledges within indigenous and local contexts: academics in the developing world often suffer this syndrome – in their writings, commentaries as well as their interactional relationships with the knowledge producers. Essentially most of what is considered relevant, internationally, is not the plenitude of empirical works they conduct locally, but the glowing outcomes shared in developed world contexts. In the field of early childhood care and development, the claim of hegemonic discourses is not far-fetched. Nsamenang et al (2006) in highlighting the problem – short of proposing counter-hegemonic discourses – call for alternative discourses that serve the indigenous people and discourses that grant ownership and contextual relevance and meaning.

Another way to view the situation is to look at the underpinnings to tags of core and periphery, which tend to highlight disjunctions. Rather the focus needs to be on a transactional model of lending and borrowing from various cultures – often promotive of a hybrid. Most relationships on this score, as for centuries, are unidirectional: the colony (now affectionately Peripheral) interacts with the metropole (Core) in an inferior–superior manner. In the empirical data, the

resignation among participants in the research, that ‘things have always been this way and cannot change’, supports this view (Pence and Hix-Small 2007; Nsamenang 2009; Pence and Nsamenang 2008).

Third and finally, theorists on world culture postulate a world polity that undercuts suggestive explications of ‘coercion’, as the major emphasis on the relationships that define global interactions. This is the view that the world is moving in the direction of convergence – of institutions and practices – with a potential to coalesce homogeneously into a unified global model. This view is in contrast to the predominantly held position of increasing divergence and diversity, across various contexts and cultures (Andersen-Levitt 2003). As far as the terrain of early childhood, it is instructive in the attempt to increasingly highlight the cultural dependency of conceptions. Prout (2005: 13) asserts that the ‘ideal childhood is unevenly distributed across the world’. However, the effects of an increasingly global world have created a world where ‘childhoods similar to those of the Euro-American middle classes are being produced and distributed around the world’ (Frones cited in Prout 2005: 20). The prevailing artefacts (media, television, games and toys for example) that have dominated the nurturing of children are now available as global products. In fact, these products and the ideological and belief systems associated with them are no longer the preserve of any one geographical setting. These have become global products with ‘cultural niches’ (among them compulsory schooling) intended for connecting ‘the local and the global’ (Prout 2005: 29). Early childhood education is generally seen in this light: a global knowledge product intent on linking the local to the global.

Costs, Benefits and Quality of ECCD

The most cited studies (High Scope PPP, Chicago CPC, and the Abecedarian among others) conducted on ECCD – in seeking to highlight outcomes – have always included some cost–benefits analysis. Most have drawn conclusions of significant positive outcomes; arguing that early childhood investments are better relative to adult remedial costs. In an exaggerated dimension to this, the World Bank even commissioned and has promoted a method to calculate such cost–benefits. These economic and human capital arguments inherent in this position

have become entrenched, almost internalised, in the discourse of early childhood interventions.

In the empirical data, cost-benefits were ubiquitously associated with quality. The understandings of the role of providers (mostly private and fee paying) and practitioners was to provide commensurable service – as benefits to children, for the costs that parents incurred. While difficult to measure, the view of parents that progress on cognitive and social levels, fully compensated for the investments of money, time, and effort, in their children when enrolled in ECCD programmes. For contexts, that regard a communitarian and traditional style of living – aiming at training the ‘whole’ human being to be a member – a well-costed intellectually based programme alone is not enough. Rather, training is intent on the satisfaction of essential societal needs; as the wherewithal required to eke out competent praxis as a basis for nurturing ‘culturally healthy’ children (Nsamenang 2009; Barnhardt and Kawagley 2008).

Indigenous Knowledges and Cultures

It is a mistaken assumption that the claim to indigenous knowledge denotes homogeneity. Often classed as a monolithic set of ideas that define a people, mostly in the Third World, along with disappearing minority cultures in some developed world contexts. There are as many variants to these cohorts of knowledges, whose identity have come to be defined by the exclusions and marginalisation they suffer, especially in the intellectual and knowledge production realm: this is not unproblematic. As a matter of fact, the essential needs that are ascribed to children: health, nutrition, self-actualisation, thriving, upbringing, education, and socialisation among others, obtain fulfilment in varied ways among cultures. Bame Nsamenang has asserted that ‘the same need is often fulfilled in different ways by different cultures’ (Nsamenang 2009: 28).

Studies of indigenous groups reveal a dislocation between their long inhabited worlds – which define and exemplify their meaning-making processes; and the Western cultural transmission lines that tend to obfuscate and jeopardize such processes (Barnhardt and Kawagley 2008; Twum-Danso and Ame 2012). A

particular issue of worth is the use of language, for example: global and historical colonisation has meant that local languages, when it comes to education, defer to the use of English or French. In Ghana, the debate is rife on the use of the mother tongue (defined as L1 – first language) as a suitable replacement to the current practice and application of English (L2 – second language). Similar such debates are not uncommon, in many countries in Africa (UNESCO 2007; Anderson-Levitt 2003). These epistemological and pedagogical issues in education are at the heart of the philosophical basis for why we educate; but even more crucial at what expense education is given. It is not surprising that systems that mimic Western traditions fail to address the educational needs of children – belonging to cultures with their own complex knowledges and adaptive integrities (Barnhardt and Kawagley 2008: 225). Writing on contemporary perspectives on ECCD, Pence and Hix-Small (2009) lament the globalist discourse that tend to goad the terrain of ECCD; almost promoting a ‘colonizing venture’ (ibid 2009: 84). Other writers have urged reciprocity in the epistemic transactional realm – cross-cultural collaborative creation of knowledge to eclipse the current binaries that define the discourse in early childhood.

Educational theories and Childhood

The ferment that has engendered advances toward continuing improvements to education owe allegiance to education theory. The justifications for most educational practices – pedagogies, educational foundations, teacher training, child development, assessment and evaluations – all stem essentially from such theories. While at the user-end of existing theories a certain forgetfulness persists of their utility – educational theories are always in the shadow of most pedagogical practices, even unconsciously. The early childhood literature is not lagging as various childhood and early childhood theories abound in every facet of the discourse. Egan (2002: 185) remarks however, that progressive educational theories ‘which attempt to harness practice to the nature of the child have also proved...futile’. It is not the intention of this study to engage the details and contentions with the two dominant theoretical positions that have long influenced education to date: Piagetian and Vygotskian educational theories. Piaget’s developmental explications of the individual scientific child constructing

knowledge via a linear progression through ages and stages; is distinguishable from the Vygotskian social constructivism which sets knowledge and learning within the social domain. The theoretical terrain of developmentalism are hugely contested; with the claim on early childhood education that age ‘cannot serve as a reliable criterion for establishing the actual level’ of a child’s learning ability (Vygotsky cited in Anning et al. 2009: 5). This firmly establishes Vygotsky’s viewpoint that learning takes place at the social interface: within a zone of proximal development (ZPD). These views on social constructivism have become popular among educational practitioners. This review and the study largely, while subscribing to both constructivism and constructionism, will not dwell on the comparative merits of Piaget and Vygotsky. Suffice it to state that there is a strong claim that American educational research along with its developmentalist leanings, have foundational roots in Piagetian developmental psychology. Equally, considering the dynamism within education, these theories have faced contestations, among academics and practitioners.

2.13 The Literature and the Research Questions

As alluded to earlier in the first section of this review, the research questions evolved from the initial trawl of the literature and the later immersion in the fieldwork. Fieldwork and its iterative relationship with the literature affected and effectively sharpened the development and refinement of the research questions for this study. As a consequence, six research questions emerged from the process:

1. How implicated is the developed world in the early child education policy, provision and practice in the developing world?
2. How is global early childhood education perceived within the local context of Ghana?
3. What are the characteristics of the global–local dynamics on the policy, provision and practice of early childhood education?
4. What elements informed the development of Ghana’s early childhood care and development (ECCD) policy of 2004?
5. How does Ghana’s local context and culture feature within current ECCD policy, provision and practice?
6. How relevant are stakeholders on ECCD on matters of policy, provision and practice?

Table 3.2 Research Questions

The above research questions have evolved due largely to two influences. The first is the empirical field work and the data which emerged from it. The second influence relates to the continuing iteration between the theoretical literature and the empirical data. As an interpretive qualitative study, employing a case study methodology, it is not unusual for the research questions to continually evolve and become more refined and sharper (Creswell 2009; Yin 2014). In introducing the research questions, along with the literature review, the intention is to offer pointers to aspects of the literature and some empirical data, which have addressed some of these questions.

2.14 Researcher Reflections on Limitations and Opportunities

From the foregoing literature review, it is beyond doubt, the centrality of early childhood across the globe that dominates. Equally, there is a dominance of the field of ECCD – in the knowledges, theories and practices – by countries in the minority developed global North. To the extent that countries in the developing world engage with ECCD via models from the developed world, a natural gap emerges between the phenomenon and the contexts. The literature review proceeded on fused knowledges from the majority and minority worlds: with the recognition that the definitive relations and the challenges that arise will potentially outlive this research process itself.

In furtherance of this position, developing world contexts hold the key to unlocking the indigenous alternative potentials, particularities, and discourses. This is not aimed at provoking conflict with pre-existing discourses but to establish dominion in their local contexts. Such assertiveness is limited: and remains a weakness within domestic knowledge production. Finally, and somewhat controversially, it is not known, and largely remain uncertain, what is lost in not exposing developing world children to ECCD practices. This point is critical, in the light of the claims that such global knowledge products alienate and disrupt the sociogenetic composition of childhoods. It is a summation of these positions – definitive of the tensions in the field – that spurred on the desire to research this phenomenon. The study contends that ECCD, as practiced in Ghana, lack the theoretical and sociocultural undergirds immanent in Western practices. Hence, justifications rest on alternative foundations, which incongruously align to the Western dictates.

Be that as it may, myriad opportunities present arising out of these disjunctions in the global–local (minority–majority world) interactions on phenomenon such as ECCD. The review of the literature, in exposing the gaps in the field of early childhood education, equally signals a need for further research to address these gaps. This doctoral study finds a purposive fit to three areas that the generality of this review revealed:

- a. An attempt to address a policy–context disjuncture by seeking developing world context-based explications as they ‘intra-act’ (Barad 2007: 383) with imported knowledge products from the developed world context.
- b. Reconceptualise existing Global North–Global South epistemic gap as a way to narrow the dearth of context-based knowledge through empirical research within the local context.
- c. The study raises new questions in the global–local epistemic dialogue suggesting that Western-oriented ECCD knowledge products appear implicated in the policy and practice trajectories of countries in the developing world.

The above arguments are reflective of the incisive RQs that guided this research. This literature review eked out the tensions (as seen in the emergent themes) within the ECCD sector; significantly showing instances of congruence and disjunction.

This chapter has been dedicated to a review of the literature. Broadly, the chapter has captured the broad frameworks and studies for the theoretical construction of this thesis. Chapter Two has also engaged with the themes arising from both the literature and the data. Such interrelationship between the literature and the research questions that lead to the data, naturally brings into focus a discussion of the chosen methodology for this research. These are captured in the next chapter (Methodology) of the thesis – Chapter Three.

Chapter Three

3.0 Methodology and Methods

This chapter is intended for the methodological approaches that led the research process. From the initial trawl of the literature to the emergent research questions; keeping fidelity with context has appeared fundamental to this research. With the study intent on seeking relevance of ECCD to local contexts, the research sought vantage position within two local settings. This offered illumination of the unclear boundaries between global ECCD as practiced in the developing world contexts such as Ghana. The quest for particularity as a way of reaching general understandings led to the emergence of the case study, as the methodology suited to unravelling the objective of this study.

In the composition of this chapter, the aim is to highlight the following in the discussion: the field of social research and the ‘paradigm’ debate; making sense of the debate through the choice of a methodological framework; the methodical and empirical activities in the field; highlighting relationships between the empirical and the theoretical; and finally, the research questions and its reciprocal and its complementary relationship to the theoretical and empirical data. As the major hinge to this chapter, the RQs feature heavily in various aspects of this methodology section.

The Research Question (RQs)

1. How implicated is the developed world in the early childhood education policy, provision and practice in the developing world?
2. How is global early childhood education perceived within the local context of Ghana?
3. What are the characteristics of the global–local dynamics on the policy, provision and practice of early childhood education?
4. What elements informed the development of Ghana’s early childhood care and development (ECCD) policy of 2004?

5. How does Ghana's local context and culture feature within current ECCD policy, provision and practice?
6. How relevant are stakeholders on ECCD on matters of policy, provision and practice?

Discussion of the Research Questions

RQ 1: How implicated is the developed world in the early childhood education policy, provision and practice in the developing world?

This question serves as the overarching question and serves as the hinge to the remaining RQs. The question arises from a review of the theoretical literature and the empirical research that followed. In the main, the major claim within this study is that: ECCD, as practised globally, has heavy influences from the developed world; with little consideration paid to local contextual issues. The result is ill-alignment of practice with context, thus raising questions of relevance of ECCD to the local contexts of practice. To allow for a critical interrogation, elements of the research question will now be discussed to offer clarity and eventual leads to the data required to answer these questions.

- i. Firstly, interactions on the global scale highlight the binarism of Global North/Global South; Developed World/Developing World; Minority World/Majority World; or Metropole/Periphery. To the extent that this remains the defining characterisation of global relations, a culture of dependency – donor–recipient relationship – naturally ensues as a result. There are however nuances and gradations to these binaries; in particular, the advent of globalisation has tempered such stark oppositions resulting in a fuzziness or blurring of the binaries. The very well known elements within Western society often used to highlight its privileged status – and childhoods lived within these cultures – appear to be universal products nowadays. In a case study of the local Ghanaian context (in Chapter Four), there is evidence of such domestic acceptance of fusion of cultures. From the cultures of learning, the learning and teaching materials, the design and character of schools and systems, toys, home influences (including media, clothing, and mobile phones and other smart devices) and general exposures children face in

their local contexts, all point to some commonalities with experiences of children, in the so-called privileged childhood contexts.

- ii. Secondly, with the prevalent binarism, knowledge products are not insulated from such relationships. Childhood and ECCD as conceptualised harbour socio-historical realities of their originary cultures (mostly Western/Developed World). Their subsequent and consequential export to foreign contexts enforces a positioning that such local contexts (mostly Developing World) lack such essential knowledges. The historic spread of compulsory schooling offers a historical colonial instance; while ECCD assumes a similar stance contemporaneously with globalisation.
- iii. Thirdly and finally, ECCD is a new phenomenon in developing world contexts, such as Ghana. Therefore, the opportunities that developing world contexts lost due to colonial educational systems, significantly require a certain critical attitude to the current wave of globalisation of ECCD. Ghana's inability to exert its local influence to incorporate the local socio-historical and cultural realities into a global template has resulted in fuzzed praxis. These reflect alternative foundations to the justifications that such local contexts offer for the practice of global ECCD. Thus, a global phenomenon when supplanted on local cultures result in the consequential disharmonies, disarticulations and disjunctions, further complicating pre-existing disadvantages.

In sum RQ 1, highlights global influences on local ECCD policy, provision and practice, is aimed at unearthing the undercurrents that define the essential character of ECCD. With early childhood education anchored to Western roots, its practice in local developing world contexts make it both questionable and problematic. The extent of the claim – along the global/local terrain – that the developed world influences heavily ECCD in contexts such as Ghana; along with the exploratory intent of the question ('how') point to a type of methodology. The case study methodology therefore offered an opportunity to illuminate the unclear boundaries between phenomenon and context; as well as to understand the effects of such global tendencies, within local contexts. The possibility to 'bound' the particularity

and explicate the global phenomenon: by taking a vantage position within the local context, makes the case study a suitable methodology.

RQ 2: How is global early childhood education perceived within the local context of Ghana?

In the main, the local contextual realities of societies should often be the major driver of the decisions on the calibre of knowledge transmission and training that is required. These decisions are critical if education is to retain any meaning and relevance. Unfortunately, for societies that have a history of colonialism, educational decisions have often been imposed, borrowed or tokenised. By the character of such post-colonial societies, the relationship between society and education becomes ritualistic without strong socio-historical underpinnings to practice. Similar attitudes afflict later educational policy and provision, as it relates to early childhood education. As a result, significant decisions on ECCD have their foundations elsewhere rather than grounded on the socio-historical and other local circumstances of contexts of practice. This study highlights this situation as the domain of contention: with implications that result in ill-alignment between phenomenon and context.

For instance, the nature of the resultant ECCD 2004 Policy in Ghana point to a more outwardly influence than to a local ferment. By following a global template, Ghana also applied globally agreed timelines, while not having the material wherewithal to achieve them. From the theoretical literature and the empirical research there is a sense of obligation with a hint of coercion; as decisions are at significant distance from the realities of the local context. The eventual move to institute the apparent globalised ECCD; is suggestive of an abandonment of local cultural realities. To unearth the undercurrents to ('how') the manifestations of disjunctions; a case study methodology afforded the research the adoption of myriad tools and methods to gain understandings of perceptions of local stakeholders. The plenitude of interview encounters, the continuing literature search, the immersion in contexts and observations, and the multi-sited encounters for documentary searches and review; all aided the clarification of the 'unclear' boundaries between the phenomenon and practice.

RQ 3: What are the characteristics of the global–local dynamics on the policy, provision and practice of early childhood education?

The intent of this question was to gauge the essential features that characterise the adoption of a perceived foreign practice; and how it plays out in the local context. From the study, it is apparent that by the character of global ECCD, certain elements stand as the defining characteristics of the phenomenon. For instance, early childhood education is emphatic on an age cohort (0 – 8 years) and mostly show regard for the institutionalisation of practice and provision. These constitute the realm where policy is put into action. With the history of early childhood education having strong links to Western societies, another defining element, its practice – especially in contexts farther from its roots – often affects the character of the global phenomenon. Within such local contexts, therefore, as exemplified in Ghana, the character of ECCD straddles the boundaries of the global template tempered with domestic realities.

This characterisation has highlighted points of congruence and disjunctions in the global–local dynamics of ECCD. It is essentially the case that the commonalities that relate to children and childhoods equally recognise the need for culture and context. This recognition has significant effect on the subsequent praxis arising out of adopted policies and provision. As a question, this led the research to the generalisation that: ECCD was to globalisation what conventional education was to colonisation. Crucially among the areas of impact are: the effect on the growth of local capacity and indigenous knowledges; also the disparate socio-historical and cultural elements inherent to both worlds (developed and developing) raise questions of authenticity and ownership; further, the consequential effects on childhood and schooling in the developing world almost fits into a coerced agenda to enforce a global convergence, among others. A case study methodology allowed the pluralism of methods; with an advantage to pitch at a local setting of practice to unravel a global phenomenon.

RQ 4: What elements informed the development of Ghana's early childhood care and development (ECCD) policy of 2004?

This research question allowed an investigation into the reasons and readiness of the developing world context of Ghana for ECCD programmes. In the conceptualisation of ECCD as both novel and global; significant issues present in questioning the justification for Ghana's adoption of such a phenomenon. In following a case study methodology, this study uncovered both local and global underpinnings to local attempts to practice a global phenomenon. The case study equipped this study with the resource to interrogate with the intention to illuminate and enhance further understandings of the phenomenon.

Critically, in determining the elements that urged the need for ECCD in Ghana, this RQ was at the heart of seeking explication of local relevance of a global phenomenon. It remains the case, and critically so, that the extent of both theoretical and empirical leads on this RQ would constitute an enduring relationship between many global phenomenon (such as ECCD) and local attempts to action them. Suffice it to state, at this point, that significant hangovers of colonialism are pervasive: and local contexts perceive grand initiatives such as ECCD along these lines. This RQ equally offer a signal on the appropriate methodological standpoint to increase understandings on the determination of such local relevance. A case study methodology allowed an exploration from the particularities of local socio-historical and cultural issues as a way of explicating the global phenomenon.

RQ 5 How does Ghana's local context and culture feature within current ECCD policy, provision and practice?

Critically, the joint effects of RQ 4 and RQ 5 highlight the problematic character of global ECCD in a local Ghanaian context. Inherently defective is the resultant

praxis that emerge through dictates from the developed world and not a locally produced practice. The assumption that ECCD was adopted – ready-made – as a composite praxis requiring merely adjustment in local contexts. This view harbours a major disarticulation which consequently undermines potentialities of local contexts to highlight their lived realities. In essence, the spirit and letter of ECCD policy and practice in Ghana effectively embody whole receptivity of such a global template.

In the end, therefore, glimpses of local culture become the inconvenient allowances that are made at the pedagogic and curriculum levels of practice. In its subscription to a contextually appropriate practice, therefore, this study sought a methodology that enhanced possibilities for contextual relevance. The methodological affordances offered by the case study ensured that such cultural appropriateness was effectively interrogated. The study took advantage of the many classroom opportunities to observe practice of ECCD within two local settings.

RQ 6: How influential are stakeholders on ECCD on matters of policy, provision and practice?

The assumption implied in *RQ 6* is that, if education (ECCD) is aimed at the benefit of the recipient contexts; then it is a reasonable proposition that local stakeholders hold some influence on the trajectory that policy, practice and provision assume. Considering the strands traversed thus far, there are both hierarchical and hegemonic tendencies at play. From the empirical study, there is some evidence of an attempt by Ghana to adopt a framework for policy based on how easily it is annexed and aligned to the global actors and their priorities (such as WB, UNICEF, and UNESCO). By these understandings therefore, stakeholders from within the local context (children, parents, schools, proprietors, the MoE, GES and the community) ended up at the bottom of the hierarchy. As far as the essential elements of ECCD policy, provision and practice, the global was never too far away. The knowledge basis along with the global precepts that undergird ECCD, as gleaned from the review of the literature, all had Western colouration. In essence, the new 2004 policy, from the viewpoint of this study and guided by this RQ, reflect a mere transposition of the global onto the local terrain. To get to such

understandings, the choice of a case study methodology assisted with an investigation of the particular local nuances that revealed the dominance of the global.

To summarise on the discussion of the research questions: their crafting and object point naturally to a certain epistemology. Yin (2014) has asserted that when considering methodologies, questions of ‘how’ and ‘why’ are mostly suited to the case study method. The intent for depth, exploration, and explanation – to describe and interpret – for further understandings and meaning all feed suitably into the case study methodology. This chapter devotes a section to the justification and discussion of the case study methodology; and how it purposefully fits with this research.

3.1 Quantitative or Qualitative Research

As hinted in the introduction on methodology above, there are myriad ways the world is seen and how sense is made of the world. In real practice, mundane as the stances assumed in the nature of the questions (of ‘how’ and ‘what’) above; they embody significant worldviews (traditions). Such worldviews and their approaches show variations that insinuate often conflictual tendencies as paradigms. Broadly, research paradigms are categorised into two: a predominantly positivistic quantitative tradition; and interpretivism associated with qualitative research. While both traditions are generally regarded as a continuum; they differ in their epistemological and ontological viewpoints (Creswell 2003; Bryman 2004; Hatch 2007; Gorard 2010; Sylva *et al.* 2010).

The interest of this study, paradigmatically, is simply to achieve ‘just a good fit for the question’ (Silverman 2013: 122) rather than the unnecessary ‘exaggeration of the differences between the two traditions’ (Gray & Densten 1998: 419). And in pursuit of what ‘fits’ this study has engaged with the merits of a seeming ‘compromise’ position seen in the now widely espoused ‘mixed methods’ or ‘combined methods’ of research, as a way forward in educational research (Creswell 2009; Gorard 2002).

3.1.1 Qualitative Methods

In simple terms, qualitative methods are research methods that seek non-numerical data. The strategies used often involve interviews, participant observation, documents, diaries, audio-visual records, drawings and artefacts. Qualitative research methods approach research through a largely inductive process (Creswell 2009). Epistemologically, it is assumed that knowledge and what can be known exist in the detail of the social context; the relationships and expressions that the social and natural contexts portend. These are seen to exude certain qualitative particularities and characteristics worthy of both understanding and in-depth interpretation to make meaning (Marshall & Rossman 1996; Hammersley & Atkinson 1995). By the same token, Goertz and Mahoney (2012: 206) refer to the ‘defining attributes of a concept’, its qualities, characteristics, and the contextual environment, along with the emerging trends which qualitative researchers address using ‘semantics’ to obtain in-depth and context-based meaning. Knowledge, by this tradition, is thus naturalistic, socially constructed and co-constructed: the ‘devil is in the detail’ as the saying goes. Therefore, a defining element of the qualitative method is its inclination to an inductive, interpretivist and constructionist approach to meaning-making, within the social context.

3.1.2 Quantitative Methods

On the other hand, quantitative research methods show predominant interest in numerical data, testing out theories and hypotheses, through examination of measurable variables (Creswell 2009). To this end, quantitative methods assume a positivist point of view with knowledge claims assumed to reside within experimentally and scientifically based approaches; often pre-determined in many cases. Some research strategies associated with quantitative methods include surveys, questionnaire and experiments. By contrast, the quantitative is largely deductive. In fact, the truth is out there and knowable in an objectively detached way and through a scientifically-experimental basis the nature of things and make predictions upon this. The prevalence of randomised controlled trials (RCTs), with essentialized scientific credentials and gold standards, in many ways explains this worldview.

The tendency to privilege certain knowledges is pervasive: ‘some educational researchers evidently believe that the choice of a research method represents commitment to a certain kind of truth and the concomitant rejection of other kinds of truth’ (Snow 2001: 3). This study has already engaged with some of these stances in the hierarchy of knowledges (especially in the global–local interactions), revealed in the review of the literature. It is a major claim in this study, that such hegemonic discourses partly explain the implication of the developed world in the trajectories that policy and practice assume within the developing world.

In fact, shifts have occurred, paradigmatically: some writers think along mutually re-enforcing pathways, convinced that each tradition lacks something which the other compliments (Sylva et al. 2010). For example, Goertz and Mahoney (2010: 214) have asserted that:

...qualitative scholars can benefit by thinking more about issues of measurement... Quantitative scholars can profit by considering more seriously issues concerning the defining characteristics of their concepts and their implications.

This position suggestive of a rapprochement with an implied *quid pro quo* which helps with research designs across the two traditions, as evident in the approach adopted by this study.

3.2 Mixed Methods

This study adopts an approach to research that could be aptly described as mixed methods. The research in its design has brought together the survey method and the case study method. The justifications for this mixing partly follow in the explanations of what mixed methods are and the rationale behind their use. Mixed methods are seen as ‘the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study’ (Jonson and Onwuegbuzie 2004: 17). Although, the latest arrival among the research traditions, chronologically, after quantitative and

qualitative, mixed methods (also termed variously as multimethod, convergence, integrated, and combined methods) are fast gaining currency, especially among social science researchers (Creswell 2003; Bryman 2006; Creswell 2009; Symonds & Gorard 2010; Sylva *et al.* 2010; Silverman 2013).

For effective combination of methods the following are essential. First, the research seeks as a default the tools to answer the research questions; rather than an adherence to a research tradition (Marshall & Rossman 1996; Creswell & Plano Clark 2007). Secondly, there has to be sufficient 'rationale' for mixing (Morgan 2007 cited in Creswell 2009: 11). Thirdly, clear understandings of the concrete definitional and operational issues (arising from challenges posed by established paradigms, for example) to a 'mixed method' approach. One such challenge is the argument that: 'using numbers and any other form of data in the same study is mixed methods is easily challenged as there is no justification for numbers to have a separate paradigm in the first place' (Symonds & Gorard 2010: 8). Other researchers (Gorard 2002; Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003) highlight the operational challenges with mixed methods. Gorard cites the 'considerable cronyism' that lead to routine rejections by journal referees, for example, merely on 'ideological' grounds; sometimes intended to maintain the status quo.

In spite of the foregoing challenges, in practice there are a significant number of research works done across the boundaries of qualitative and quantitative: Waysman and Savaya in their 1992–1994 *Mixed Method Evaluation* of SHATIL – an Israeli non-profit service organisation (Waysman & Savaya 2006: 141); Gaber and Gaber in their study of *'Street vending on 14th Street, New York City in 1990/1991'* (Gaber & Gaber 2006: 157); Herman and Egri's *Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative Methods to Research Environmental Leadership* in 1994 (Herman & Egri 2006: 177); Sylva and colleagues' 1996 Longitudinal Study – *'The Effective Pre-School and Primary Education (EPPE)'* (Sylva *et al.* 2010), to cite just a few examples. This study hopes to follow in the footsteps of these earlier studies to build on the strong credentials that mixed methods bring forth in educational research.

3.3 The Case Study Approach

Case study is perceived, variously, as the attempt to illuminate a decision (Schramm 1971; Parlett & Hamilton 1974); inductively and heuristically offering descriptions of a particularity; which is bounded within a naturalistic setting (Yin 2014; Bassey 1999; 2001). It is also perceived as a contemporary phenomenon (Yin & Davis 2007; Yin 2014); using multiple sources of evidence (Robson 1993; Yin 2009; Yin 2014); to offer a ‘thick description’ from the viewpoint of the participant (Geertz 1973). In the end, it produces practical knowledge – reciprocally informing practical action (which was the object of the case) (Flyvberg 2006); yet still, remaining an interpretation of the issue and not attempting to generalise as representing the truth (Somekh & Lewin 2011). Cumulatively, the focus on process and outcomes, in the joined-up yet deliberately convoluted definition of case study, predisposes typified questions along multiple typologies: descriptive, exploratory, and even explanatory. In its practical preference for such typical questions as ‘how’ and ‘why’, the case study presents a way of seeing the world; even if a different way of seeing the world (Becker 1998; Yin 2014).

The case study operates on assumptions that knowledge resides in the contexts of activity. Such phenomenon are contemporary and bounded with a focus singularly on the particular not the general. Therefore, given in a sense that there is a knowable world to social scientists; the tradition of case study will be to adopt a ‘vantage point’ (a case) which then allows conclusions to be drawn – from the particular across the general (May 2011: 221). This is the case with this study, where two school settings offered the supposed contextual vantage points, to perceive and interpret a global yet contemporary phenomenon. Essentially to investigate the unclear boundaries between phenomenon and context: by exploring from the local (particular) to the global (general).

Historically, such vantage points have characterised the works of various researchers often cited as applying the case study method: Malinowski’s use of the ‘village’; Le Play’s adoption of the ‘family’ unit; and the scholars in the Chicago School’s choice of the ‘city’. All these collectively provide focal points ‘providing miniature replica of problems frequently encountered within the society’ (Hamel 1993: 15). The advantage of having a case then allows an in-depth investigation, in

the prevalent complexities in the interrelationships: ‘a concentration of the global in the local’ (Hamel 1993: 38).

Resultantly, techniques that allow the observer to take such vantage positions resonate with such traditional ethnographic methods as participant observation and immersion in the field. Given the varied interpretations that can arise, with a likelihood of bias; the case study’s conflation with ethnographic practices (assumed to be essentially interpretive and qualitative) raised questions about its scientific appeal in the 1950s and 1960s. Later in the 1980s, before a re-emergent case study inquiry, most case study designs took on positivist (largely statistical and quantitative) turn. To its credit as a methodology, therefore, the case study is ‘loosely identified’ with both camps (May 2011: 226–227) – the interpretivist as well as the positivist – showing integrity in its ability to survive the ‘methodological limbo’ (Gerring 2004: 341). Increasingly, the fundamental focus on particularisation within a context and the desire for generalisation find settlement in the contemporary articulation of ‘case studies as narratives that fulfil a social rather than a theoretical purpose’ (May 2011: 227). Such plasticity (and advantage) of the case study as a methodology has served to progress this study with minimal methodical disruptions.

3.3.1 Scope and Features

As a method therefore, the case study is suitable for investigating and researching ‘a contemporary phenomenon...within a real-world context’ seeking depth rather than breadth; more so in situations where the ‘boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident’ (Yin 2014: 16). The case study method of inquiry in its composition characteristically shows ability to cope with multiple variable interests, to achieve triangulation of the evidence with its divergent use of pluralist sources, and also shows no inhibitions to the adoption of prior theoretical iterations as a guide to the gathering and analysis of data (Yin 2014).

There is no doubt therefore that the case study by the foregoing has progressed from its historical associations with being an exploratory tool to be used as a precursor to another method (pre-experimental) (May 2011). The scope and

features outlined, establish the case study as a method of inquiry with its own integrity, logic of design and techniques that guide commencement through closure (when appropriate) of the research process (Yin 2014; May 2011). Having said that, there are still generic critiques and traditional concerns regarding this method of inquiry: questions of rigour; generalising from case studies; unmanageable data deluge; confusion with ethnography; and non-experimental and non-scientific claims (Flyvberg 2006; Yin 2014; May 2011). As experiences differ, based on contextual realities, these criticisms and challenges are only better examined in the practicalities of executing a case study, as exemplified in this research design. In this study, the use of multiple methods: among them survey questionnaire before case selection, observations, diaries, interviews and long immersions within contexts of research; ought largely to be judged as insinuating an ethnographic process not ethnography per se. For instance, the multi-sited character of the trail of the data exemplifies the opportunistic approach to the use of a case study approach.

3.3.2 Typology: Single or Multiple Case Study Designs

As evident in the earlier presentation of the RQs, the preeminent preoccupation with depth rather than breadth, gave rise to the use of the case study, for this research. To achieve both the exploratory and explanatory goals of this research, a natural decision on choice of method arose. In the application of a case study, in focus are a particularity, an instance, an event or even an individual, when considering typology. This is helped along by critical evaluation of the overarching rationale for the use of case study. In all these, the fundamental question has to be the unapologetic quest for rigour as a mark of a good case study.

In response to both issues raised, from the foregoing, Yin (2014: 51– 6) hints at five rationales for using single-case designs. Yin cites elaborately Gross and colleagues' (1971) focus on a single school in *Implementing Organisational Innovations* to illustrate typology. Other instances came with the revelatory nature of previously inaccessible worlds portrayed in Whyte's (1943/1993) *Street Corner Society*; and Liebows' (1967) illumination of the unemployed African-American men in *Tally's Corner*. Such instances highlight the selection of a case deemed as critical, unusual (extreme), common, revelatory, or longitudinal. In this articulation, Yin makes

allowances for other situations, such as a pilot case at the beginning of multiple case study (Yin 2014). This is especially important when the rationale is for theoretical development. In which instance, cases should be selected 'according to whether they are least likely or most likely to falsify a theory' (May 2011: 229).

While the selection of a single case design offers the advantage of achieving the particularities that essentially define and satisfies the character of case study. For instance, the case study as bounded unit; a particularity; in-depth and thick description, among others – as rationales (as outlined by Yin above) are problematic. For instance, typicality by its very nature assumes homogeneity: the idiosyncratic nature of social actors that compose the social world invariably undercut possibilities of achieving the 'typical' case (Mitchell 1983; May 2011). This view, along with other vulnerabilities – such as 'unsuspected slippage', misrepresented case, or even accessibility – could potentially upstage a single case (Yin 2014). On the specific criticism of non-representativeness of a single case, Stake (2005) robustly underline a superior rationale in such cases, in the use of a case study. That is the need to focus on the capacity and potentialities to generate further understandings, as the overriding essence for adopting a single case.

The foregoing would seem to suggest that multiple rather than single cases are suited to offering better understandings of contexts. The crucial point is that for case study to claim its rigour, reliability, and distinctiveness as a tool of research; affordances for comparison have to be part of the methodological mix. This view reflects 'a growing consensus that the strongest means of drawing inferences from case studies is the use of a combination of within-case and cross-case comparisons' (George & Bennet cited in May 2011: 233). In spite of the differentiation between holistic and embedded cases, a multiple case study design is any number of cases beyond a single case. While the procedural mechanics differ, depending on the number of cases, Yin (2014) regard such variations as merely within-the-same methodical rather than stark methodological polarities: in the sense of a 'classic' (single case) and a 'comparative' (multiple case) (Yin 2014: 56).

In this research, two cases are the subject of investigation; the study therefore has a multiple case study design. Each case is treated as a holistic or intrinsic unit before

an attempted cross-case comparison. It is worth stating at the outset, a contrary view to the argument that the worth of the case study lies in its comparative analysis and to generalise to other contexts. The rationale for this design is far from any desire (while possible) to ‘improve the basis for generalisation’ (Dopson 2003: 224). On this, Yin (2014: 57) has proffered possibilities for generalisation, emphasizing that ‘case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes’.

With an intrinsic multiple case study design, the essence is to achieve a deeper analysis and interpretations of the cases: the ultimate objective being to represent the case and not the world (Stake 2005). In operational terms, a two-case study design then follows a ‘replication logic’ rather than a sampling logic in multiple experiments. This process offers potentialities for ‘literal replication’ in the case of a small number of cases (two or three); or ‘theoretical replication’ in larger number cases (such as six to ten) (Yin 2009: 54). Regarding the former, this study replicated literally the first case in a second case; with possibilities to deliver similar, rather than contrasting findings; thus, reaffirming the reliability of the earlier conclusions from the first case.

3.3.3 The Application of the Case Study in a study of Early Childhood Care and Development

Early childhood is one of the areas that policymakers increasingly seek policy interventions, constantly concerned ‘with the evidence about the efficacy of initiatives’ (Stephen 2010: 250). Christine Stephen (2010: 252) in *the Early Years Research-Policy-Practice Nexus: Challenges and Opportunities*, concludes that:

A tension between the unanswered questions of interest to researchers and the quest of policymakers and practitioners for clear answers to complex and contingent issues is likely to be an enduring feature of the research/policy/practice relationship.

In sync with the above, such unanswered questions – a lifeline to most research endeavours – marks the crucial beginnings of this research work. The stances

conveyed above, and in relation to research in early childhood education, mean that researchers need to offend more by problematizing ‘taken-for-granted’ or even the unquestioned ‘consensual perspectives’ (Stephen 2010: 260). In post-structural terms to ‘unsettle the familiar’ (MacNaughton 2005: 1), by assuming the role of activists; to achieve ‘equity’ as early childhood researchers and educators. It is quite apparent that policymakers need some education to reach understandings that a single study is unlikely to provide answers to all their questions (Taylor & Debbink 2008). This study is therefore presented as one of those learning opportunities to clarify and enhance further understandings in the area of early childhood education policy, provision and practice. More so, in developing world contexts that lack the privileges of huge budget researches, this is a further valuable contribution to knowledge.

At a conceptual level, the study has implicated developed world knowledge products – such as ECCD – in the schooling trajectories of children in the developing world. As its core objective therefore, the study investigated disjunctions between phenomenon and contexts: by suitably applying a case study methodology. A methodology defined by Yin (2009; 2014) as seeking to investigate issues of ‘unclear’ boundaries between phenomenon and context. By taking vantage positions in two schools (cases), the research observed a contemporary ‘global’ phenomenon – ECCD, as practiced in a naturalistic ‘local’ context (two schools in Northern Ghana). The intent is to illuminate such practices by offering a qualitative interpretation of events via an in-depth (thick) description.

3.4 Stages in the Research Process

This is an interpretivist multiple case study; whose execution involved a multiplicity of methods. Among the commonly applied tools included: direct and participant observation; archival records; documents; interviews; artefacts; focus groups; and photographs and audio materials. Halfpenny has posited that the ‘usual caveat’ in regarding every study as ‘one case study’ is unfounded, in the theoretical understandings of the term. This is because essentially, ‘any study is of one case at some level of analysis’ (Halfpenny 1979: 809). The said tendency is commonplace with the obsession to generalise in the quantitatively statistical and positivist sense.

Such a hindered narrowed focus, in some ways, did not apply to this case study design (Stake 2005; Yin 2009; May 2011; Halfpenny 1979). Quite clearly, in its scope this study captured thusly, Halfpenny's (1979: 811) understanding:

The aim of interpretivist enquiry is to explain actions and interactions by conveying a culturally appropriate understanding of them, and so interpretivist studies are necessarily case studies – studies of one culture, one conceptual framework, one frame of meaning.

Yin (2009; 2014) in extolling the virtues of multiple case studies – along with multiple sources of evidence, has indicated their potential to mitigate the common criticism levelled against the use of case study as a sound methodology. In particular, the issues of generalisation and replicability (internal validity) (also, Sarantakos 2005). Critically, the bounds of the study are within the conceptualised global phenomenon of ECCD praxis (as an educational tool); and the way this unravels in the contextual realities of two Ghanaian schools. In the light of this, the scope involved two cases: in a holistic design to allow an in-depth consideration of the individual cases within the case study; with possibilities for replication, in a second setting (Yin 2014). For practicality, the study was conducted synchronically – with 2 months spent in each case study setting. This was individually analysed away from the sites of study, prior to any replication and the convergent cross-case inferences and analysis.

3.4.1 Case Study Research Design

In constructing this research as a case study, certain elements that characteristically define the scope, and components to gain a rigorous study have been considered, in line with established traditions in the field (Miles & Huberman 1994; Yin 2009; 2014). For the reliability and validity of this research, certain standard guidelines were followed. Among them the following:

- i. Cases have been selected and bound within definition and context (Miles & Huberman 1994). Two cases were selected via a survey questionnaire with context in the Northern Region of Ghana.
- ii. Selection, while challenging, was arrived at based on both theoretical propositions from the literature and empirical data (garnered from earlier survey of provisions in the Northern Region of Ghana) (Yin 2003; Miles & Huberman 1994).
- iii. The application of a conceptual framework arising out of the emerging empirical propositions and the literature. An effective alignment between the RQs, the literature review and the empirical data has assisted in the search for contextual relevance and meaning.
- iv. Continual iteration between data and literature deepened understandings of the phenomenon. A thorough review of the literature led to the case study research questions (generally ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions);
- v. Also, an iterative relationship between data from the cases and the initial propositions that led to the cases; and
- vi. Finally, clarity is evident in the comprehensive composition of this thesis – with the case reports – which answers to the interpretations given to findings (Yin 2009; 2014).

3.5 The Four Phases in the Case Study

In consideration of the elaborate guidance (Miles & Huberman 1994; Yin 2009; 2014), the case study was largely structured around four broad phases: Phase I presents the Pilot Study; Phase II the Survey of Providers of ECCD services for case selection; Phase III the Case Study; and Phase IV the Triangulation with Key Stakeholders.

3.5.1 Phase I – The Pilot

Having settled on a case study method, based on the research questions from the provisional review of the literature, a decision was taken to conduct a pilot study. The Pilot was conducted in Ghana, from December 2013 to the end of March 2014; prior to main study, in the summer of 2014 through March 2015. While it was uncertain at this stage of the research what cases would be selected for the main study, the institutional and initial administrative arrangements – preliminary contacts ('knocking' – as in 'knock on the door' to use a local jargon) were made for access from gatekeepers via mobile telephone, text, and personal contact – visits to schools and also social encounters.

The pilot study, conducted ahead of the multiple case study had clearly defined, yet limited, objectives: 1) to follow a case study protocol, in the purposively selected case; 2) to pilot the chosen methods of data collection (observation, interviews, documents, audios); 3) ultimately, and reciprocally, to add to the quality of the research design and to sharpen the research questions (bearing in mind the generation of questions for the survey of providers captured in phase two of the study). In terms of the layout for this section, only the experiences from the Pilot study will be featured, in this section, the substantive cases later considered in the study (in Phase III) are a subject for discussion in a case study substantive chapter (Chapter Five). The reason for this, cannot be emphasized enough. This is to isolate the report of the two substantive cases (in the main study) from the pilot – which is not a complete study; neither is it a stand-alone single case or part of the multiple cases, executed in the study.

The use of a pilot case study is acceptable prior to the commencement of a multiple case study (Yin 2009; 2014); insofar as it is not 'regarded as a complete study on its own' (Yin 2014: 53). It is within such bounds that this pilot was treated: simply to test the waters as outlined above in the objectives. With this, the following section will highlight the *Experiences from the Pilot Phase* (Phase I). I perceived the pilot as

offering the relevant ‘work experience’ for the main field work; these experiences are therefore, not treated as ‘findings’.

3.5.1.1 Lessons Experienced from the Pilot

As per the objectives of the pilot, among them: feasibility of the main research project; experiment with the tools for the data generation; and the relevant issues, crucially, access for main fieldwork; these findings added quality to the research design as well as a foretaste of what was to be expected once the fieldwork began.

1. *Research Design*: Prior to the Pilot study, the design of the research – corroborated by the ‘Upgrade Paper’ authored by the researcher – was qualitative in nature. The study employed an interpretivist case study as a methodology. Considering the nature of the research questions, the quest was to zone in on the particular, a singularity, and context-specificity. The pilot did not seem to suggest that an alternative or a variation in strategy is required. While the setting was purposively selected, it fits in with the sampling strategy that will be applied in the main data generation phase. In treating the substantive cases from the main case study – as individual cases, the piloted case offered glimpses, later confirmed, of what the practice of casing and effecting the research was like.
2. *The Research Questions*: the research questions consisted of six questions, with RQ 1 serving as the main overarching question. The piloted tools (direct and participant observations, conversations, semi-structured and open-ended interviews, focus groups, as well as documentary data generation) appeared to be a good fit for the quest for perspectives and depth of meaning. Equally, the lead by the RQs in the determination of who to ask and where to look (events, processes, the subjects and objects and participants) remained a feature of the research. The pilot, unsurprisingly however, caused a rethink of a couple of RQs, mainly to refocus them to avoid ambiguities. For example, a question on

‘what is the Age of Compulsory Enrolment in Ghana’: the current official Ghana Education Service (GES) position is that all children have to be in school from age 4 although primary 1 enrolment still takes place at age 6, due to non-availability of kindergarten places in public schools. Although, practitioners highlighted ambiguities in ‘what the official enrolment age is’. For clarity, therefore, the two RQs on the ACE (later abandoned as RQs) were reworded to address these concerns. At the time of composing the thesis, the research questions have evolved; ardently due to the deepened understandings that have emerged from the literature and the data.

3. *Sampling* was largely purposive: specifically, the sampling of the pilot case among five possible cases. The pilot also tested random sampling of children using numbering sequence on the class register. Three issues emerged, from the sampling technique, which called for adjustment: a) a child not selected insisted on taking part as he came from within the same household as another who was selected; which will cause a problem at home; b) also, two children who should ideally be the randomly selected ones had speech and learning difficulties, and teachers insisted on replacement; c) sampling of documentary evidence required a rethink; there was apparent discomfort in exposing some documents perceived by staff to be embarrassingly dated/out-dated, or even private and need not be shared. Besides the experience with the documents’ sampling, the main study did not present similar issues.

4. *Data Collection Tools:*

- i) *Observations* worked well in most cases except in two situations.
- ii) *Conversations* worked best relative to structured interviews. Overall, I found most people felt relaxed and said more when I was not my usual researcher self with the notepad to hand and the recorder in close proximity.
- iii) *Interviews*: Two types of interviews were piloted. Semi-structured individual interviews with staff; as well as group interviews with children.

- iv) *Focus Group*: Also, a focus group was conducted, with staff from the preschool (ages 3 – 5); the two primary school teachers were not available after school. About 8 members of staff took part in the FG.
- v) *Documents*: the most challenging aspect was with documents. Most of what this pilot garnered were sample pictures taken with a mobile iPhone; by physically going through several pages.

3.5.2 Phase II: The Fieldwork

This section of the chapter intends to tackle the practical undertakings that defined the fieldwork experience; and the eventual data generation, and analyses process. The section introduces a ‘Framework’ that draws on the relative strengths of the positivist and the interpretivist worldviews: using survey questionnaire in a multiple case study design. This is followed by the selection of the two cases in the case study; subsequent to the survey questionnaire.

In the scheme of the research, upon a successful upgrade and an already approved ‘Ethical Research Form’ (even prior to the Pilot study), the fieldwork was now foreseen for July 2014 and lasted till March 2015. There is an explanation for the length of the fieldwork phase: a few schools contacted with survey questionnaire indicated they were winding up the term. Therefore, any chance for participation was only possible sometime in September 2014, when the schools resumed.

3.5.2.1 Survey before a Multiple Case Study

Survey has been defined in operational terms, in this study. This is contrary to its ‘rigid’ application in quantitative social research. In this study, the survey is seen as the attempt to gather information, with prompt, despatch and minimal contact, on the prevalence of a phenomenon. In this case, to gauge the provision of early childhood education services in schools. The loose application of survey, in this research, is aimed at merely gauging at the surface certain patterns and their prevalence. By this loose application, the strict adherence to issues such as:

representativeness in the sampling process; generalisability to populations; and anonymity, adopt a certain nuance. Thus, achieving an initial exploratory goal yet still limited to the underlying goal for deploying the method. In this particular instance, to assist in the selection process of cases, for an in-depth case study. For instance, with the major reason of the survey being the possibility for follow up (for in-depth study of selected cases), questionnaire design had definitive elements to link respondents to their responses. On sampling, a non-probability (judgemental and purposive) sampling was adopted. The reason is the intent behind the survey: which is the position of this research to offer descriptions and interpretations of the cases; rather than an objective to generalise findings, globally, to other settings and contexts.

Crucially therefore, in the sense that probability sampling is critical to survey designs; that centrality was unwarranted in conveniently sampling to whittle down the number of cases to be used for a multiple case study design. In the light of all these, survey is understood as a quick ‘snapshot’ of an area (not a sample population) to get information or data about the prevalence of providers of ECCD services, specifically, the provision of preschool and early primary provision on the same site. In keeping with normal practice, the survey was achieved with questionnaire (See Appendix). These were distributed to 20 schools within five districts in close proximity to Tamale, the capital of the Northern Region of Ghana (Tamale Metropolis; Yendi Municipality; Sanarigu District; Mion District; Tolon District).

3.5.2.2 Framework for Combination of Interpretivism and Positivism

This study in disclaiming any disposition to joining in the paradigm wars – between the qualitative and quantitative traditions – opportunistically made pragmatic use of the resources and tools that the combined methods offered to social research (See Figure 4.3). To this extent, the study has applied a definition by Greene et al. (1989: 256): ‘mixed method designs as those that include at least one quantitative method (designed to collect numbers) and one qualitative method (designed to collect words), where neither type of method is inherently linked to any particular inquiry paradigm’. Both the case study and survey have been appropriated to the

interpretivist and positivist turns. The reasoning behind their adoption therefore relate meaningfully to the philosophical basis for mixing methods. The optimal deployment of methods and tools that assist in the delivery of the research objectives. Be that as it may, the application of the survey data to selection of cases further enhanced the strength of the research. The complementarity garnered from utilising the strength of both the positivist and the interpretivist traditions enhanced the quality of this social science research.

Relative Strengths of Case Study and Survey Methods		
	Case Study	Survey
Controllability	Low	Medium
Deductability	Low	Medium
Repeatability	Low	Medium
Generalisability	Low	High
Discoverability (explorability)	High	Medium
Representability (potential model complexity)	High	Medium

Table (4.2) Adapted from Gable (1994: 3)

The combination of the two methods is not a methodological breach: various researchers have eulogised the pluralist utility of seeming divergent methods being combined (Yin 2009; 2014; Plano Clark & Creswell 2008; Gable 1994; Lee); as seen in the earlier cited studies (the EPPE for example). Tim May (2011: 126), summarily, reiterates this viewpoint:

...surveys are often used as part of a multi-method or mixed method approach wherein qualitative methods precede and/or follow a survey, thus permitting the development of an understanding of agents' perspectives, social process and context. Adopting a position of methodological pluralism using a triangulation of well-designed methods can provide breadth and depth.

Such utilitarian worth for mixing methods, previously perceived as 'atypical' 'daring' or 'rare' in sections of the literature, is fast becoming a pragmatic pathway to prosecuting research agendas (ibid). In constructing a framework for using a mixed

methods approach, this study sought to live in both paradigmatic worlds. It is important though to clarify the sort of mixings used in this study namely: at the level of triangulation of methods; adopting pluralism of methodologies straddling the positivist and interpretivist; multiple data generation tools and analytical frameworks, to achieve validity in converging lines of inquiry. Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989), from their study of 57 mixed method designs, offer a useful conceptual framework for mixed method evaluation designs. By definition and purpose, mixing should aim at *triangulation*, *complementarity*, *development*, *initiation* and *expansion*. This study utilised this framework along with the definitions that are ascribed to these terminologies; as well as their adoption of Thomas Cook's (1985 cited in Greene et al. 1989: 256) exhortations to 'multiplism' in a post-positivist world:

The fundamental postulate of multiplism is that when it is not clear which of several options for question generation or method choice is 'correct', all of them should be selected so as to 'triangulate' on the most useful or the most likely to be true.

These views, in congruity with the rationale for this study's use of the survey (within the framework of this study) and a case study methodology emphatically enshroud the study within the fabrics of a mixed method tradition. The adherence to accepted case study norms; along with sufficiency in the rationale for mixing, have optimised the options for this study. In the understandings conveyed by Greene et al, the combination has expanded possibilities for meaning rather than narrowed options to achieve such understandings (see Figure). From the RQs that led to the methodology and methods, mixing methods constitute a major strength of this study.

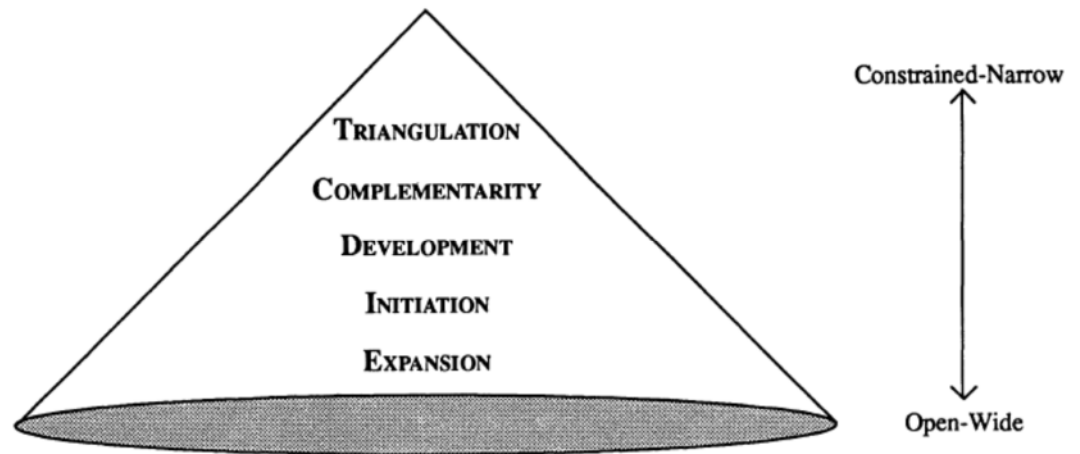


FIGURE 3. *Flexibility of design options for mixed-method purposes*

Figure 4.3 Adapted from Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989: 270)

3.5.2.3 Survey Questionnaire

Questionnaires were designed to gauge the types of provision of early childhood care and development, in the Northern Region of Ghana. These were designed as paper-based for self-administration and reporting; with twenty-eight items on the questionnaire. This covered three important areas for the study, besides information regarding name, location, and contact: Provision; Policy; and Practice – under each heading was populated eight, eleven, and nine items respectively. The items covered included the nature and description of provision; policy framework and understanding; further, on practice, clarity of understanding and justifications for current practice (see Appendix for the full questionnaire). Questionnaire were distributed personally and with the help of aides (in two locations) to all the schools. The aides happened to work in that locality and offered to distribute questionnaires to eight schools in the two towns (Mion and Tolon). I followed up once they returned contacts of persons within the schools; to whom questionnaire were handed. Conveniently sampled, all the providers and towns were within a 60-mile radius: a total of 20 preschool settings from 5 districts were therefore contacted, in the Region. Upon the delivery of each questionnaire, a contact was logged on the list that served as the sample frame; with my personal contact already on the questionnaire. Later telephone follow-ups were made to check if any help was needed with the questionnaire; these were few. With all questionnaires distributed

by the end of August, it took a little over three weeks to get the first questionnaire back; and by the end of September further contacts resulted in a final return of 6 questionnaire.

From very little experience of survey designs, I was quite hopeful, naively, that all the questionnaires shall be returned, as no one had indicated upon initial contacts a willingness otherwise. In the final ditch to gauge any further interest, a school – I had high hopes of participation as a pioneer in the sector – rang to actually indicate their unpreparedness to be part of the study and so declined to fill the questionnaire in. When asked for reasons, I was told that the school had decided at a meeting not to participate: and no further contact was made.

Analyses therefore began on all the returned questionnaire, at the same time. The low return rate, although it had no effect on the study, could be attributed to various circumstances: questionnaire distribution timing when the schools were preparing for the long vacation; misunderstanding of the rationale for the survey based on the items on policy for example (misconstrued as some secret investigation); the few schools that specifically offered such services for early childhood may have been fatigued by similar such demands; moreover, some schools simply did not have preschool provision; lack of or expectation to be incentivised to motivate the completion of the survey (this is not uncommon considering the researcher came from a university based in a wealthy European country); and finally, as it became evident once researched commenced in one of the cases, general apathetic attitude to paper contacts; nature of the community suited to personable verbalised methodologies. In proceeding therefore, the study worked on the presumption (enquired of providers in the covering letter) that their returned questionnaire meant an expression of interest to participate in the main study. Upon which consent further follow ups were made to the two selected cases for the commencement of the research.

3.5.2.4 Data from the Questionnaire

Data from the returned questionnaire were quickly analysed: this was based on the criteria set for cases to be selected for in-depth study. These were among other

things: a centre should have provision that cover the ages 3–6; settings with provision for primary school (for enrolment at age 6, especially Primary 1 and 2); rural, semi-urban and urban differences in provision; settings with working knowledge of the 2004 ECCD policy framework. Basically focussed on these criteria, and considering that only 30% of the questionnaire were returned (6 returned out of 20), analysis was less daunting than anticipated. On the typicality of poor returns, some writers on the use of questionnaire have posited that return rates of 40% are not unusual, unless some incentives or even inducements or vested interests in the survey are at play (May 2011). Also, the returned questionnaire came from only two of the five districts that were purposively sampled: coding was applied to individual questionnaire; the lists of codes defined and kept; with the intent on follow-up to two of the cases eventually selected.

The coding for the returned questionnaire are as follows: TLF01; YDCA02; TLGI03; YDCB04; TLA05; TLAG06. Using a grid (see Table 4.4 below) with critical questionnaire items sought and simple ticks on questionnaire, and counting at the end, gave a fair idea of which questionnaire was in a with a chance for inclusion in the study. Cohen et al. (2000: 265) have advised on the need to check the returned questionnaire for ‘completeness, accuracy, and uniformity’. This was now followed up with filling the codes alongside the elements being looked for in a case, for the study. It was evident, right from the start, that this was dominated by private providers: even in the major township (Tamale Metropolis for example) preschool provision – especially pre-Kindergarten – remains a preserve of private providers. Of all the 20 schools on the sampling frame, only 4 were government (public) schools; the remainder were all private. Another explanation for the poor return rate might have due to siting of ECCD centres within rural communities. Which was certainly the case with three (Mion, Tolon and Sanarigu) of the five districts.

Questionnaire item	Criteria Met	Criteria Not Met
Has provision for 3 – 8 years (Preschool and Primary)	TLF01; YDCA02 ; TLGI03;	YDCB04; TLAF05; TLAG06
Rural	YDCA02	TLF01; TLGI03; YDCB04; TLAF05; TLAG06
Urban	TLF01 ; TLGI03; TLAF05; TLAG06	YDCB04; YDCA02
Semi-Urban	YDCB04; YDCA02	TLF01; TLGI03; TLAF05; TLAG06
Private	TLF01 ; YDCA02 ; TLGI03; YDCB04; TLAF05; TLAG06	
Public		TLF01; YDCA02; TLGI03; YDCB04; TLAF05; TLAG06
Primary school on site	TLF01 ; YDCA02 ; TLGI03; YDCB04; TLAF05; TLAG06	
Knowledge and awareness of the ECCD Policy (especially 2004 policy)	TLF01 ; YDCA02 ; TLAG06	TLGI03; YDCB04; TLAF05;
Sufficient understanding of practice (e.g. ECCD concepts; curriculum; pedagogy)	TLF01 ; YDCA02	TLGI03; YDCB04; TLAF05; TLAG06

Table 4.4: Case Selection from Survey Results

From Table 4.4 it is clear that an attempt to detect patterns and quantify such subjective descriptions (for example ‘sufficient understanding of practice’), in a quantitative sense, is futile. Equally, considering the irreducible nature of human actions, experiences and attitudes, applying such numeric measuring criteria will eclipse the significant meanings sought in the contexts that such phenomena are

examined. Sylva et al. (2010: 232), on the copious amount of data garnered from the EPPE study, lamented the significant loss of ‘voices’ in a ‘forest of graphs and charts’ as most of them were reduced into a number. Therefore, qualitative judgements were made, in this instance, in the analysis of the data (from Table 4.4). While this conundrum is recurrent when methods are mixed, the resolution for such essentially lie in the conceptual frameworks that underlie the chosen methodology; as well as the rationale for mixing the methods in the first instance. In both instances, this study loosely coupled the survey method to a case study design: with no intent to generalise. As a result, therefore, sampling have been conveniently purposive; with the intent to select cases, for the multiple case study.

As case selection was the primary rationale for the adoption of a survey questionnaire, engaging in any further statistically quantitative analysis became unwarranted; as far as the remit of this study is concerned. On the flipside, an alternative would have been to treat each (survey and case study) exclusively according to its paradigmatic epistemologies. A position which renders incomprehensible and inconceivable the whole point of a mixed methods study. With a mixed methods design, the EPPE Study has been singled for praise by colleague researchers (Siraj-Blatchford et al. 2006; Sammons 2005): ‘the qualitative element of EPPE did more than “illustrate” the quantitative findings; it led to new findings, and novel interpretations’ (Sylva et al. 2010: 228)

3.5.2.5 Selection of the Two Cases: TLF01 and YDCA02

Drawing from the data summed up on Table 4.4, two cases were selected to proceed as the substantive cases to be studied in-depth. The analysis have been done applying subjective judgements with a purposeful intent; simply, to result in the case selection from a survey. Hence, the responses to the survey questionnaires only fit and in fact require a first-level of survey analysis: the ‘surface’ description of the data. The subsequent phases of survey analysis such as, exploring differences among variables via statistical inferences and ultimately predictions are irrelevant in this situation. This analytical method is not outlandish: when the survey method is applied, ‘the methods of analysis depend upon the data produced. In order to use

some statistical methods legitimately, it is necessary that data are of a certain type' (May 2011: 122).

The selected cases – TLF01 and YDCA02 (now renamed as Gukpegu Early Childhood Experimental School and Naaya Early Childhood Experimental School respectively) – fit the type of provision sought for the case study. From the criteria table, the two cases met all the criteria; and differed, relative to the other questionnaires, in the quality of responses (Cohen et al 2000). The two exhibited – in their responses – typical understandings of ECCD practice, as a phenomenon. Coincidentally, albeit significant to this study, the same understandings implicated in the disjunctions between ECCD phenomenon and the contexts of practice such as Ghana, a country in the developing world. While the other respondents – TLGI03; YDCB04; TLAF05; TLAG06 – met some of the criteria, the quality and adequacy of responses only allowed partial analysis of the data entailed in them. Significantly, however, ECCD provision vary from the rural to the urban. To explain briefly, two reasons account for this. Firstly, as has been highlighted in the literature review to this study, ECCD (especially services for under 3 years) provision is largely dominated by the private sector; who in most cases accentuate existing inequalities by concentrating on affluent urban places (in this case the main towns of Yendi and Tamale). Secondly, the understandings displayed by the two selected cases are borne out by the literature: most policy decisions saturate the urban before trickling down to the rural (Punch et al. 2007). The data naturally achieved a balanced representation (Urban and Rural). To clarify, not in the strictest sense but a nuanced 'Urban Tamale' and a 'semi-Urban Yendi'. The Yendi case selected has its provision located in rural Kugu village (but associated with Yendi as a catchment). It is quite clear that the approach to selection and decisions have been systematically explained; with concepts critically and closely defined: to settle any lingering doubts regarding seeming drawbacks of subjectivities – apparent in the selection of the two cases. Tim May (2011: 235) signals the dénouement, to the still unyielding:

Commonly case study research is seen to entail a greater degree of subjectivity both in the initial bounding and orientation of cases as

well as in their conduct...one approach is to seek to manage out the presumed bias of the researcher through closely defining methods and process.

3.5.3 Phase III: The Multiple Case Study Research Design

To reiterate, this study was conceived as a multiple case study with two cases: within preschool settings in two different contexts – based on social demographics and school characteristics. The aim is to achieve an in-depth study: preceded by a survey of providers of ECCD services; in complementarity with an interpretivist case study, resulting in a mixed methods study. The following section of this chapter intends to deal with the methodological rubrics such as quality judgements utilised in the execution of the cases; the substantive cases; the tools for data generation; and finally how the data have been analysed. All these hinge on the substantive case study chapters in Chapter Five.

3.5.3.1 Quality Judgements about Case Study Methodology

To recap, an essential definition of the case study by Robert Yin (2014) is reproduced. As a method it copes with a range of techniques; various sources of data collection; alongside prior theoretical propositions as a guide; thus converging in one frame of meaning, albeit pursued as diverging lines of inquiry (Platt cited in Yin 2009). It is reasonable to conclude from this that individual cases, as a matter of methodic practice, are executed individually. As a consequence, therefore, literally replicating a first case to the second case is, nothing but, a methodical matter. Essentially, for trustworthiness, validity, and reliability, similar methods were applied to the second cases. In the main, the study worked to avoid data spillage from one setting to another. In all situations, therefore, decisions adhered to standards of quality required of case study research: by this positioning, the study would be judged as valid, reliable, and strongly replicable – literally and not theoretically, to another setting (Yin 2014: 57). So, what makes a good case study, in terms of its quality and soundness?

With its leanings to the qualitative tradition, quality judgements of good case study research lie, not in the ‘scientific rigour’, but in the particular contexts, events, processes, with unrelenting inclination to interpret for meaning-making: essentially unravelling the human experience (Maxwell 2004; Miles & Huberman 1994; Sayer 1992; 2000; Becker 1996). By this, the interpretivist conception of ‘reality’ of such human experiences are socially constructed; within cultures, variously, rendering a subjective rather than an objective perspective. Lincoln and Guba (1985) have posited certain evaluative judgements, in their seminal work – *Naturalistic Inquiry* – they include: *credibility*; *transferability*; *dependability*; *confirmability*. In pursuit of these evaluative yardstick, this research and the researcher adhered to such important processes as the following:

For *Credibility*, Lincoln and Guba (1985) insist on prolonged engagement with participants and the contexts. In following the ethnographic process, I had long immersion in the contexts of the research. In the process, I persistently observed naturally occurring events and situations. To enhance the credibility further, I applied other methods to triangulate; used member-checking and peer debriefing; pursued rival explanations; and also ensured that all the evidence achieved optimal visibility and utility; thus effectively reducing data redundancy.

According to Lincoln and Guba (ibid.), *transferability* is key to the external validity of the research. While this research did not have generalisation as an overarching aim; the literal application to a second case enhanced the validity of the research. In aiming for a thick description of the context, the research achieves a resonance with other contexts that assists in the accomplishment of its external validity. ‘Thick Description’ – a term attributed to earlier qualitative researchers (Ryle 1949; Geertz 1973) – aims for a depth of description of the cultural phenomenon and social relationships, to such sufficiency as to draw conclusions that appear transferable to other settings and contexts (Holloway 1997). By the extent of the layering, with in-depth interpretation, for meaning within the case study contexts, the heightened resonance within similar contexts, have been likened to generalisation by some researchers (Pollard 2011; Bassey 1999; Stake 1995).

To achieve some *Dependability*, the research process must be rigorous in its ‘logic of design’ and its adherence to the management of the range of sources, methods and instruments that have been engaged. It must essentially satisfy an external audit inquiry. This way conclusions drawn can be traced all the way to the design, the data and the findings. In the conduct of this case study, due attendance to diligence imply that ‘traceability’ is possible. Traceability is commonly used (in ethical trading) for ethical validation of businesses in its fair trade credentials. In this context, traceability is borrowed to insist on the quality of the processes followed; allowing easy external audit and validation. As a replication study, similar methods and tools were used and these converged into one frame of meaning. Yin’s (2009; 2014) exhortation to use a case study data base, adopted by this study, assisted in achieving the construct validity and reliability of the evidence.

Finally, it should be possible to establish the *confirmability* of the study through the audit trail, triangulation and reflexivity. On reflexivity, the intent is not to have an empty mind – without preconceptions – rather an open-mind and owning up to inferences that may evoke biases. Malterud (2001: 284) asserts that: ‘preconceptions are not the same as bias, unless the researcher fails to mention them’.

These quality judgements of qualitative research, are not exclusive to Lincoln and Guba (1985), other researchers and academics in the field have proffered similar evaluative measures (Angen 2000; Denzin 1978; Patton 1999; 2001; Creswell 1998; 2002; Geertz 1973; Miles & Huberman 1994; Merriam 1988; Roller & Lavrakas 2015). Specifically, in relation to case study research designs, Yin (2014) spells out four tests: *construct validity* – the correct measures for the concepts under study; *internal validity* – when seeking causal relationships (although not applicable to the descriptive and exploratory design of this study); *external validity* – carving out the reach to which generalisations can cover; and *reliability* – in the use of the tools with possibility to generate similar results.

3.5.3.2 Analytical Framework for the Two Case Studies

Tim May (2011) hints that the climax of the research study resides in the analysis. The apparent desultory steps, in that direction, is a reflection on – even a testament

to – the undeveloped nature of the case study method, when it comes to analyses (Yin 2014). With this awareness, Yin (2009; 2014) gratuitously offers the strategy and the techniques to assist in the accomplishment of the task. The ‘strategy’ to wit, constitute the overarching construct; within which the ‘techniques’ – the actual instruments and tools – function to achieve the ‘highest quality’ of analyses (Yin 2014: 168).

In pursuit of high quality analyses Yin (ibid.) has outlined four critical strategies. In the first instance, the researcher needs to deductively rely on ‘theoretical propositions’. Second, by inductively working on data from the ground up, the research is effectively ‘playing with the data’ achieving patterns and emergent themes that grow in respective relevance. Thirdly, whatever the choice of style, the researcher must attune to ‘developing a case description’. And fourthly, a good case study must examine all the evidence; even the negative ones – depth implies an exploration of ‘plausible rival explanations’. In real practice these are complemented by such techniques as: pattern matching; explanation building; time-series analysis; logic models; and as addendum to multiple cases, cross-case syntheses. The ultimate choice of strategy and technique, notwithstanding, the centrality of developing ‘strong, plausible, and fair arguments that are supported by the data’, when analysing, cannot be overemphasized (Yin 2014: 167).

Thus far, having elaborated the quality judgements to which the methods and the research process are accountable; and an indicative framework within which the case study data are analysed; the spotlight will now be on the methods that produced the evidence – the data – to be analysed.

3.5.3.3 Data Collection Techniques and Tools

The use of case study offered flexibility in choice of tools of data collection (Yin 2009). As a method its very character is suited to the adoption of multiple sources of evidence. This study, therefore, applies the wisdom of using sources that offer complementarity – as various methods bring with them various strengths. The data collection phase is as a consequence of the sorts of research questions that were distilled from the in-depth review of the literature, methodologically leading to the

case study. To make sense, therefore, this section has reproduced below a grid (from the Case Study Protocol – See Appendix D) that define the relationships, variously, among: the research questions; the methods; and sample population.

Research Questions	Methods	Sampling
1. <i>How implicated is the developed world in the early childhood education policy, provision and practice in the developing world?</i>	Literature, official international documents, Interviews, Focus Groups, Documents	Stakeholders – Policy makers, professionals, international NGOs
2. <i>How is global early childhood education perceived within the local context of Ghana?</i>	Documents (curriculum, pedagogy), Interviews, Observations	Preschool professionals, policymakers, Parents and children
3. <i>What are the characteristics of the global–local dynamics on the policy, provision and practice of early childhood education?</i>	Interviews, international agreements, policy documents, Focus Groups, observations	Stakeholders – Parents, Policy makers, professionals, ECCD INGOs
4. <i>What elements informed the development of Ghana's early childhood care and development (ECCD) policy of 2004?</i>	Documents, Observations, Interviews, Journal, pictures. Focus Groups	Preschool Settings and Official Policy documents
5. <i>How does Ghana's local context and culture feature within current ECCD policy, provision and practice?</i>	Participant Observations, Documents, Focus Groups, Interviews, pictures, Researcher journal	Preschool children, School Records, Professionals, Parents, other stakeholders
6. <i>How influential are local stakeholders on early childhood education on matters of policy, provision and practice?</i>	Documents, Interviews, Focus Groups, Observations	Official policy documents, School setting, stakeholders (parents, staff, children, policymakers)

Table 4.5: Research Questions linked to Methods and Sample.

The foregoing Table (4.5) depicts the iterative relationship between the RQs and the fitness of the methods and sample to discharge the queries inherent in the questions. As an interpretivist case study, the search for depth was critical: hence, for each question plural methods and sources were sought. The advantage presented in the triangulative effect of the multiple sources; thus resulting in enhanced validity and reliability of the case study.

To revert to the earlier discussion of the RQs; when unpacked as individual questions, the methods offer leads on how to get them answered; while the sample indicates from where and whom one may direct queries for answers. On the main research question (RQ 1) for example: the quest is to detect the reasons behind the implication of the developed world. To this end, with the initial propositions arising from the literature review; emergent hegemonies prevailed in the discourses underpinning ECCD. The subsequent application of the case study unravelled further the global tendencies: through official international and local policy documents, interviews and observations of practice. With the methods outlined, it is concomitantly implied that sampling would seek out stakeholders at the INGOs (UNICEF, UNESCO, WB among others) policy-making levels, professionals at local practice levels, and finally the school contexts themselves. By the case study methodology, I succeeded in taking a vantage position; to explore and explain naturally occurring situations and events. A similar approach was applied to the remaining five questions. Thus, for each question; how to get answers (methods); and from where or whom to seek answers (sample), effectively defined the entire construct of the study.

3.5.3.4 Discussion of the Field Instruments

It is important to state that, this study perceives a natural progression from the research questions that led to the case study methodology – and guided as a result the chosen methods and field instruments, and the emergent data. This methodical reasoning implicates the choice of methods in the overall interpretivist methodology. In turn, the interpretive implication contextualises the methods in the very social realities, where data will be generated (Miller 1997). In the light of this, the pluralist methods are the latest entrants, in the array of tools that the flexibility of case study allowed. Discussion of the field instruments – interviews; documents; observations (direct and participant) – will now proceed in the following section. While apparently divergent, in their quests, their target as indicated is to saturate each RQ with as much evidence as are sufficient to answer the questions. It has commonly been the case in the conduct of this research, to apply in one instance observation, interviews, focus group and documentary

evidence to one question. In so doing, it is hoped that these converge eventually; to offer depth within a unified frame of meaning.

3.5.3.4.1 Interviews

Interviews are described variously as: a conversation with a purpose; information gathering through conversation; interactional method of eliciting relevant yet mutually beneficial information; knowledge construction; and simplistically asking questions for answers. These definitions were noted down from a lecture when colleague research students were asked to define what interview was. These spontaneous views are not farther from the art of interviews. Dingwall's (1997: 58–60) unpacked definition of the interview as accounts convey similar such notions. That interviews involve and evoke competence; also culture-dependent and are essentially social constructs. Further, although untypical conversations they involve self-presentation of the respondent, agenda-setting by interviewer, and a mix of the real and the representation, in the dialogical turn-taking process.

As one of the traditional methods of research, in social science, interviewing remains, the basic, yet essential instrument to generate data (Nesbitt & Watt 1984). This research applied interviewing during the data collection phase of the study. The use of interview varied, in accord with the sorts of data that this research required. The agenda of this research, along with prevailing circumstances, therefore determined the particular style of interview; in this case semi-structured and in-depth interviews (IDIs). Interviewing, in its application, took cognisance of the category of participants: children (semi-structured interviews in groups); staff and other adults (semi-structured interviews and IDIs). Overall, interviewing was conducted on twenty two (22) occasions: 6 individual interviews covering 'Key Stakeholders'; 6 post-lesson observation individual interviews; 8 group interviews covering 2 groups of parents and 6 groups of children; as well as 2 Head Teacher interviews. For this study, an attempt was made to cover the stakeholders to whom ECCD mattered: children (from 3 to 8 years old); adults – parents of children attending, professionals within preschool and early primary (Primary 1 – 2); ECCD

stakeholders (policymakers, funders, academic institutions involved in training; non-governmental organisations (NGOs)).

3.5.3.4.2 Semi-structured interviews

This study mainly applied the semi-structured style of interviewing. Wragg (2002) names three types of interviewing among them: Structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. Semi-structured is the middle position between the strict adherence to a format akin to questionnaire (structured) and the tendency to ‘roam freely’ (unstructured). With a semi-structured the advantage is mutual: the participant is able to have in-depth expressive accounts, still within bounds. The interviewer, on the other hand, working with and from a schedule is enabled to impose an order on the process and the outcome. As a method of interviewing in this research, it allowed the research to generate similarly comparable data from other sources, by applying the same method. The case study protocol, therefore, entailed schedules of interview questions for four categories: Children; Parents; Staff; and Key Stakeholders. A schedule was arrived at by the translation of the RQs into procedural elements to be investigated: these involved several, almost tangential, variations of questions for each of the categories – all drawn from the primal source (the RQs). These have broadly allowed an ordered analyses process (especially the coding and categorising) of the data generated through this method. The interview schedules, by their design and availability, offered pointers to the variables that needed investigation. As a consequence, this played advantageously to the research, in particular at the coding phase.

Similarly, I used in-depth interviews (IDIs) in the encounter with the Key Stakeholders: 3 proprietors of schools, the ECCD Regional Coordinator, and the former GES Director and the NNTTC. These served as the key informants (as captured in the Triangulation Phase IV) for this study. This category of stakeholders offered further triangulation of the data from the cases.

Many early childhood researchers encourage the involvement of children's voices; asserting their capabilities and competence, in the construction and co-construction of data, as it affects their worlds (Griebel & Niesel 2002; Lewis 2001; Broström 2006; Mayall 2010; Wyness 2012; Christensen & James 2000; Christensen & Prout 2002). While this is not a unanimous position, 'methodologically, including the child's perspective...remains a challenging as well as a rewarding one' (Griebel & Niesel 2002: 65). In this study, as much as possible interview with children sought group interviewing methods, as a technique (Kefyalew 1996; Somekh and Lewin 2011). This offered the naturalistic 'social support' necessary for exploring topics deemed naturally challenging for children (Lewis 2001: 256).

The research interviewed children in both cases, under the case study. Operationally, and in line with conventional practice, interviews applied to ages 3–8 years (covering preschool and Primary 1 and Primary 2); and took place in all cases, in groups. The overall sample of children in the study was seventeen (17) children: interviewed in groups of twos and threes, resulting in six (6) interview encounters. These interviews and the data from them, as evident, were triangulated with classroom observations, children's drawings, as well as school records (for example assessment log book).

It is important to distinguish group interviews from other social conversational encounters. In relation to individual interviews, group interviews assume similar posture; only that the questions are posed to a group. In such a group interview scenario, each respondent still holds an entitlement to their responses. Group interviews, on another plane, diverges from focus groups on many levels. Within a focus group the intended dialogical relationship naturally emerges with little control and moderation. Also, FGs enjoy a seemingly loose structure relative to the tight schedule of an interview (case study) protocol. While child group interviews tried

to utilise the benefits of such a loose construction (semi-structured interviews); it nonetheless stayed true to an interview format for ease of data analysis.

In terms of its format, child interviews while semi-structured took place in short bursts, with lots of interruptions and interferences, due to strategic location within proximity to other staff: other children prying; a participating child not cooperating with others (group dynamics); or just generally children's mundane needs, natural behaviours and attitude. Further, as children were normally taken out of classes, it was important to fit interviews in, with the most minimal disruption to their routine. Structured as somehow between open and semi-structured interviews: open-ended interviews to allow a settling in phase for children to talk openly and freely without borders (usually starting with the images on the interview schedule); then ushered into the semi-structured phase applied flexibly permitting the sometimes perceptible, but wrongly conceived as jejune, detours identifiable with child speak.

Significantly, however, it was important that children had two ingredients critical to interviewing: the abilities of receptive language and expressive language. As a researcher, it was equally important to be skilled, patient and flexible to all possibilities, with children's interviewing. From the experience of this research, a couple of challenges became apparent in interviews with children. Granted that children had both the receptive and expressive linguistic abilities, their involvement had to be on the imperatives of: the rationale for the research (the research question). Such methodological considerations become 'magnified and compounded' (Wyness 2012: 204); with consequential implications for the reliability and validity of the research. On this quality judgement score, it remains unsettled the contention of whether children's behaviour accurately predict their competence. In view of this latter point, Lewis (2001: 257) has cautioned on the need to avoid two types of errors. In the case of a Type 1 error, the tendency is to 'underestimate a child's competence'. Type 2 error on the other hand, usually inclines to 'overestimate a child's competence'. Other researchers, who have had encounters with children share a different experience. Dunlop and Fabian (2002:

148) have asserted that: ‘children in our studies have been found to be creative, fluent and capable’. Suffice to highlight that two months within a setting is so limited to be able to reach conclusions on this aspect: and so the research simply approached these pragmatically while being open to accommodate the range. As a mark of its quality, child interview data were triangulated with other sources such as drawings, observation, school records and staff interviews. Equally, such triangulated data had to be corroborated via the perspectives of Key Stakeholders. As indicated earlier, no question among the RQs sought explication from a singular sampling source: the benefit of case study allowed the utility of pluralist methods.

3.5.3.4.4 Focus Groups

Focus groups (FGs) and not focus group interviews (as admonished at a lecture), are among field instruments that apply cooperative group approaches to generate data. They can be mistaken for group interviews which they are not, by their character, composition, process and utility. FGs as a tool, has been utilised for its tendency to provoke evocative potentialities for collaborative data generation by a group. It is markedly different from group interviews which opportunistically advances an agenda via a tight interview schedule, to a congregated group. FGs are a deliberate orchestration: the group is put together for the purpose of engaging with the topics; with very little moderation by the researcher. Somekh and Lewin (2011: 62–63) regard focus groups as ‘a social process through which participants co-produce an account of themselves and their ideas, which is specific to that time and place’. When successful, FGs offer immense clarity to issues: the initial attributive positions that invite the challenge from other participants, provide an emergent data that has been tried and tested – by peers among a community of practitioners.

As a major strength, FGs encourage otherwise dormant members of the group to achieve a depth of deliberation. Thus, the emergent viewpoints offer much richer data and information than a one-on-one encounter (Kruger 1988). However, its use

can be misunderstood: the set up may bear resemblance to other school policy forums or meetings. Also, as a ‘stranger’ in the community, the researcher is generally unaware of significant pre-existing factors. For example, any prevalent hierarchies or ‘pecking order’; historical animosities and other familial issues among them cultural appropriateness. Moreover, the expertise of the group is assumed as given: however, in reality unfamiliarity with the concept may render questionable, the knowledge base of the otherwise ‘group of experts’. Without these considerations, putting together a group and setting them up to ‘hang out’ invite potential confusion (Somekh & Lewin 2011). Other limitations such as bruised self-esteem; dominant characters; expertise of the researcher; and more importantly how to analyse and report FG data, imply that FGs are not as cheap and easy as may be perceived (Barbour 2007; Somekh & Lewin 2011).

This study used focus groups, in the ‘hard-to-get’ category: namely the teaching staff. This description is so apt that, without FGs – the time commitment from this category, in applying individual interviews – the research would have suffered a serious challenge of omission. Sampling for this group was non-probability: it was based on the available staff; as well as the dictate of whether as constituted the group could engage with the process and provide the relevant data. Across the two cases, two focus group discussions were held: Case Study One 9 members of staff; Case Study Two 7 staff members, averaging 49 minutes in length. They were used to highlight understandings, or clarify lingering confusions, that pervaded ECCD. Questions typically enquired of the group of members of staff were:

What early childhood education means? What alternatives exist in relation to school, for children below age six? How much of Ghanaian culture is contained in ECCD policy provision and practice? How influential are stakeholders in the promotion of ECCD policy and practice? Is ECCD as practiced in this school foreign or local driven?

The above questions, were often posed initially by the researcher, allowing time for discussion; and only interfered when a topic appeared naturally exhausted. This

was in line with Massey's (2011: 23) categorisation of focus group discussion into articulated data; attributional data; and finally leading to the emergent data. With the experience of the pilot, it was fairly easy to glean these stages; and such awareness enabled a confident handling of the focus groups. As a source of data, for this study, the two focus groups provided evidence that was already member-checked and collaboratively passed as the emergent views of the groups.

3.5.3.4.5 Direct and Participant Observation

Case studies within the two settings necessarily entailed both direct and participant observation. The reason, simply, is as a result of the ethnographic rootedness of the case study methodology. The traditional role of the anthropologist to immerse in long-term field work in the quest for naturalistic and 'insider' perspective: with the ultimate aim to engender meaning. Such meanings are contextual, and inhabit the observed 'natural' and 'ordinary' happenings, events, processes and encounters within local contexts (Somekh & Lewin 2011: 55). Examples abound, in the field of social science, in the use of participant observation: Becker and colleagues' *Boys in White* (1960); Lacey's (1970) case study of a Grammar School; Ball's (1981) case study of a comprehensive school, among others. Pollard (2011) in a similar vein endorsed ethnography as a basis for his case study.

It is important to restate that by applying this method, the study strides into a particular epistemology; the regard for naturally occurring behaviours, words (verbal and non-verbal), and the researcher (the self) as mutually implicated in the process of construction of a certain social reality. Crucially, as an observation tool, it requires a tendency to make the familiar strange and the strange familiar; allowing commonplace assumptions to be questioned (Rose 1999). The ultimate quest is to 'draw large conclusions from small, but very densely textured facts': effectively making meaning out of a complexity – by conveying contextual appropriateness to 'the interpretation of cultures' (Geertz 1973: 24 and 28). While these stances appear strongly ethnographic, the study merely adopted the strengths of the ethnographic

process to strengthen the construct validity of this case study. To repeat therefore, it is more of the ethnographic process than ethnography per se.

As a method, observations yielded immense data; captured via note-taking, observation sheets, audio-recording (using mobile iPhone application) in post-observation interviews only; digital images (photographs); and the reflective journal. From the experience of this study, observations in settings sort of fulfils the case study's character to pitch a vantage position: a physical presence rendering the setting 'transparent' to the researcher. These offered possibilities for acculturation – albeit, being wary of 'going native' as to almost lose focus; rewarded with rich raw data from an 'insider' perspective; and importantly, possibilities to decipher between 'intentions and effects' (Somekh & Lewin 2011: 134).

On this basis, some post-observation interviews assisted in further unpacking certain practices within classroom encounters. In many ways, these post-observation interviews triangulated the data from the classroom observations. From its practical use, observations posed certain challenges: it is threateningly intrusive; poses ethical issues in its representation of the researcher's constructions (perused from the setting) as confirmation of (rather than an observed) practice (ibid). Dahl (2010: 154) reflects on the 'epistemological underpinning' of anthropology's main methodological tool – 'participant observation': 'The idea that one is to "become", not "be" part of a community. The good anthropologist is close enough to explain it, but not 'too close' so that she loses distance and starts speaking on her own behalf.' The logical requirement of a phenomenological distance – allowing estrangement of the familiar (Joas & Knöbl 2009).

In this study, the focus of observations was: to gauge local attempts at practicing ECCD, reflected in the policy framework (for example the ECCD Policy of 2004 by the Government of Ghana - GoG); the way policy translated into provision and practice; as well as the overall conceptualisation of ECCD in the local setting. With interest – based on the research question – on context and culture as they feature

in ECCD policy and practice, the lingering risks of ‘misinterpretation’ or ‘overinterpretation’ (Lewis 2001), were effectively negotiated through the long-embedded presence and immersion. In terms of the numbers, it is impossible to enumerate the countless universe of observation opportunities. This open universe of opportunity, relative to interviews for example, proved a challenge at the analysis of observation data. Specifically, on classroom observations (sometimes as a participant); 20 classes were observed with 6 post-observation interviews. Such encounters were semi-structured and easily utilised as data.

The twenty observations in classroom contexts were often semi-structured and covered the age-range 3–8 years: usually lasted in the most part the entire lesson. The focus of observation, in classroom situations, were on general practice: classroom seating arrangements; furniture (desks and chairs, cupboards, board, and shelves); learning materials and resources (text books, books, note books, pens/pencils, colouring tools, wall hangings); children; staff/practitioners; curriculum, pedagogy; and relationships. The designed field instrument (see Appendix D for Observation Sheet) captured, in a running record of events, generating data for all the listed elements. In spite of the density of the data from observations, it offered triangulated opportunities against other techniques: it proved invaluable the extent to which it served to correct impressions conveyed in interviews, for example. In a particular instance, despite the repeated insistence, even by management, that staff-pupil ratio was 2:30; observations (within class and the register of children present) proved contrarily higher. On the other hand, it threw up surprises, reflecting the vagaries entailed in naturalistic settings: a child suddenly took ill; teachers’ forgetfulness, and uncertainties about what is being observed even if they knew why; and being challenged variously by children (for writing or being in their class) seeking reminders on the reasons the stranger is in their environment.

3.5.3.4.6 Drawings and images

With the intention to involve pre-school aged children (3–6 year olds) and those in early primary (6–8 year olds), a further less threatening, yet inclusively participatory, method was the use of children's drawings (Lewis 2001). Drawings by children offer 'a means of understanding their views of situations and cognitive levels' (2001: 257); while at the same time, forming the basis of conversations and further triangulation. In this study, the use of images and drawings only applied to children: the case study protocol contained images of some familiarity to children such as classroom, playground, a teacher by a board, a local cultural performance (drumming and dancing) and children eating at school, among others. These were used as prompts in group interviews with children; and also in initial open-ended talks to settle into the flexible semi-structured interviews. This way, the data generation, was more controlled, and in the reach of children's expertise. Although, children's drawings are regarded as a bit ambiguous and complex, they set research within contexts familiar, and easily interpreted by children (Lewis 2001). In the interview process, drawings assisted with easing the discomfort with speech: children were allowed the latitude to draw to express their understandings. This study therefore found innovative ways around involving preschool-aged children in the research process.

3.5.3.4.7 Documents

Bowen (2009: 27) defines document analysis as 'a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both print and electronic (computer-based and internet-transmitted) material'. In addition to the methods above, a significant source as well, were official policy documents, conference reports, school records, books, journals, meeting records, and computer-based documents within institutions that are covered among the list of stakeholders. Whenever accessible, the extant but revelatory character of documents, further enhanced trustworthiness, validity, replicability and integrity of the inquiry process (Yin 2009; Gibbs 2012). However, this was not an easy tool to generate data, from the experience of this study. The reasons will be made apparent, shortly. According to Bowen (2009), the use of documents as sources and also as part of the arsenal for

analyses, has not been effectively accounted for, even by experienced researchers. The use of the method, like other qualitative tools discussed earlier, require a rigorous examination and interpretation of data for further understandings and development of knowledge (Bowen 2009).

In researching a global phenomenon, such as early childhood education, documentary analysis in triangulation with other methods have helped the corroboration and convergence of evidence; an imperative when conducting a multiple case study. Further, reliability, validity and trustworthiness are enhanced. In the practical sense, the researcher must assume the stance of a vicarious observer (Yin 2009): thereby accepting the complementary role documents play in the analysis; rather than treat documents as ‘social facts’ (Atkinson & Coffey 1997: 47). Furthermore, the ultimate convergence of all triangulated data from documents, interviews, observations allow ‘a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility’ of the research (Eisner 1991: 110).

From experiences of the pilot phase as well as the main study documents were not easily made available. An essential and primary document, setting a context for this study (for example the Ghana ECCD 2004 Policy Booklet) was obtained, eventually, not from the requested source, but serendipitously, from an encounter with a friend. Within schools as well, the reticence to allow access was common experience: often expressed professionally citing grounds of confidentiality, not having authority or privacy reasons; to the impolite and wilful refusal (such as experienced with a training agency for ECCD), among others. On the summation of these challenging experiences, documents have potential flaws in their application: ‘insufficient detail’; ‘low retrievability’; and ‘biased selectivity’ (Yin 1994 cited in Bowen 2009: 31–32). On personal reflection, one can surmise that officials are quite aware of the ‘triangulative’ power of documents – that would likely contradict, correct, or challenge them – effectively thereby dictating the reversion to propriety of conduct; thus unsettling their already settled ways and practices.

In the main, despite the challenge with this method, various reasons accounted for the use of documents as a tool to generate data. In particular, the desire to link ‘text’ to ‘context’ – using documents within their ordinary and natural places of practice. MacLure refers to the attempt to, iteratively, bridge ‘words and world’ (2013: 174). Also, in this research, the cultural, historical, and general background information needed to understand the layers of meanings behind activities, events, and processes, was within its remit. Moreover, from the experience in the pilot, more questions were generated from documents (for example by studying the Preschool Curriculum booklet) to help with the interviews and also observations. To corroborate this experience, Bowen (2009: 30) cites the example of Goldstein and Reiboldt (2004) in their use of document analysis to generate further questions in their ethnographic study. Still, the use of documents, provided some missing links in the trail, for evidence for this case study (Bowen 2009). Goldstein and Reinboldt (2004 cited in Bowen 2009: 30) conclude: ‘*interview* data helped focus specific *participant observation* activities, document analysis helped generate *new interview questions*, and *participant observation* at community events provided opportunities to collect *documents*’ (methods italicized by the researcher for emphasis).

3.5.3.5 Sampling

Sampling is highlighted as a crucial element in the drive to have a validly constructed study. This generalisation inherently defines its problematic application to interpretivist qualitative studies such as this. Marshall (1996) makes a distinction in the use of sampling in research: quantitatively, a representative sample is desired from a defined population, to which generalisation is later made; however, with qualitative studies the intent is to contextually interpret humanistic and social issues, for meanings within the bounds of contexts. By this understanding, the size of the sample (*N*) is ‘determined by the optimum number necessary to enable valid inferences’, as in quantitative studies. For the qualitative researcher, on the other hand, an appropriate sample size is ‘one that adequately answers the research question’ (Marshall 1996: 522). As a case study, the methodology of this study, has intimate resonance with the latter claims; to the extent that the objective is from

the specific to the general, samples are diffusely entangled within the bounded complexities of phenomena and contexts. In essence, as much as are necessary to saturate interpretations with meanings, ought to be the key factor. Because justifications, ultimately, are to the cases (in context) and not to a defined population (in the quantitative sense). In any case, it is a mistaken view, qualitatively, to confuse the instances of ‘analytic generalisation’ to the ‘statistical generalisation’ sought in quantitative studies (Yin 2009: 38). Yin therefore exhorts case study methodologists to avoid the ‘fatal flaws’ of assuming ‘cases’ as ‘sampling units’; because they definitively are not (ibid). These philosophical positions entailed in the qualitative tradition influenced the approach to sampling in this study. As the choice of case study methodology was driven by the RQs, the sampling followed the dictates of the case study protocol. Accordingly, as Flyvberg (2006: 26–27) views it:

...good social science is problem-driven and not methodology-driven, in the sense that it employs those methods which for a given problematic best help answer the research questions at hand.

Largely due to the nuanced approach to sampling, in qualitative studies, Marshall (1996: 523) outlines three types of sampling: *convenience; judgement; and theoretical*. Convenient samples, normally, involve those easily available and accessible; however, it is perceived as less rigorous and lacking in ‘intellectual credibility’. A more justifiable and intellectually credible approach is the judgement or purposeful sampling: the researcher actively seeks out productive actors, agents and informants skilled to do justice to the research questions. Apart from the pilot phase, most of the sampling decisions applied judgement or purposeful sampling – in the selection of cases; in sampling parents; staff and other stakeholders interviewed during the study. This sampling method worked, for this study, in part due to: my prior experiences in the contexts of the research; prior knowledge and familiarity with the subject of research; and prolonged engagements – empirically within the settings as well as the theoretical literature. By the same token, the essential objective, in case selection, was to seek out – not a randomly sampled representative

case – but a ‘strategic’ case that offered ‘greatest possible amount of information on a given problem or phenomenon’. Flyvberg argues that ‘the typical or average case is often not the richest in information. Atypical or extreme cases often reveal more information because they activate more actors and more basic mechanisms in the situation studied’ (2006: 13). In this study, once the cases were selected, based on the initial survey results: a ‘replication logic’ (not a ‘sampling logic’) was then applied to the second case (Yin 2009: 54), upon the completion of the first case. By doing this, the study hoped to produce similar, rather than contrasting, results thereby strengthening the reliability of the case study. This pragmatic, yet rigorous attendance to method, as shown on the matrix (that links the RQs–Methods–Sample) below already envisioned: pathways on who to ask; where to look; when to act, logically cohered in the design of the research. Flyvberg (2006: 17) concludes:

Besides the strategic choice of case, the execution of the case study will certainly play a role, as will the reactions to the study by the research community, the group studied, and, possibly, a broader public. The value of the case study will depend on the validity claims which researchers can place on their study, and the status these claims obtain in dialogue with other validity claims in the discourse to which the study is a contribution.

Although the researcher, as already emphasised, was aware of the need for flexibility: original samples while overly large numerically (see Table 4.6 below), the practicality of the fieldwork and the ultimate aim of the study forced a natural reduction to pragmatic numbers. By the end of the study, the sample stood at 49 participants: involving children, parents, staff, and other stakeholders. These spread over two schools both located in the Northern Region of Ghana. The research questions – with their emphasis on naturalistic contexts and stakeholders (defined below) – as they affect policy and practice within early childhood, led to this sample. Some academics (Agee 2009; Stringer 2007) urge that: ‘All stakeholders – those whose lives are affected by the problem under study – should be engaged in the process of investigation’ (Stringer 2007: 11). Stakeholders, as defined within

Ghana's 2004 ECCD policy, was adopted by this study. They include: Parents, Communities, Private proprietors/investors, NGOs, Development Partners, Philanthropic organisations/personalities and, the Government of Ghana (GoG 2004).

Items	Population/Participants	Sample	Methods/Tools	Tally
Case Study One	1. Parents	3	Group Interview	1
	2. Children	10	Group Interview	3
	3. Staff/Other Adults	9	Focus Group Classroom Observations Post-Observation Interviews	1 8 3
	4. Head Teacher/SMT	1	Interview	1
Case Study Two	1. Parents	5	Group Interview	1
	2. Children	7	Group Interview	3
	3. Staff/Other Adults	7	Focus Group Classroom Observations Post-Observation Interviews	1 12 3
	4. Head Teacher/Principal/SMT	1	Interview	1
Key Stakeholders (Key Informants)	1. ECCD Regional Coordinator	1	Interview	1
	2. GES District Education Officer	1	Interview	1
	3. National Nursery Teacher Training Centre (Accra)	1	Interview	1
	4. Proprietors of ECCD Centres	3	Interview	3
Total		49	Interviews = 22 Focus Groups = 2	
Table 4.6: Sampling of Participants				

3.5.4 Triangulation with Key Stakeholders (Phase IV)

As initially intimated, in terms of the phases this study has assumed: Pilot (Phase I), Survey and Case Selection (Phase II), Case Study (Phase III); and then the Triangulation (Phase IV) which offers a convergence of stakeholder perspectives. As a final phase to the design, this stage sought the perspectives of the major stakeholders (policymakers, proprietors and funders among others) to triangulate the data already gathered. This category of participants as already noted, offered the research the depth required for conclusions to be drawn on phenomenon that regular practitioners lacked expertise. In a sense, they constituted the ‘key informants’ or elite sample that aided corroboration and further insights into various aspects of policy, provision, and practice, thus allowing bridges from ‘preobservation to postobservation’, effectively enhancing the validity claims made, in this study (McKeown 1999: 183).

In terms of their significance, Ulrika Dahl (2010: 154–158) decries the understatement of the role of key informers: claiming that such references as ‘friends’ but ‘rarely as authorities’, in acknowledgement of the contributions of key informants, appear discourteous. Consequently, as co-participants in the research process ‘they are able to explain and translate the cultural contexts in question’ (ibid: 154). Moreover, by their standing within their institutions, they more than other stakeholders are uniquely positioned to illustrate the theoretical positions and challenge the ‘master voice’ of the researcher. Still, most research is shielded through a ‘technology of objectivity’ resulting in named authorship appropriated to the researcher; in a co-produced knowledge with key informants (Dahl 2010: 158).

Without further opportunities for returns to the individual case study settings, this category of stakeholders triangulated the evidences gathered from the individual cases. Significantly, the data gathered from those sources collectively applied to the individual cases: as they were the sources that triggered those further queries. The category included six (6) stakeholders: 1 Regional ECCD Coordinator; 1 District Education officer, Ghana Education Service; 1 National Nursery Teacher Training Centre; 3 Proprietors of ECCD services. The style of interviewing for this category involved in-depth interviews, with a semi-structured format: with a minimum of 45 minutes and a maximum time of nearly two hours (in a couple of instances). The depth required meant that, both handwritten notes and digital recordings were used: overall recording length of about eight hours’ worth of interview (a total of 480 minutes). Considering the volume of material, only partial

transcribing has been applied to this data. Continual listening and distilling of relevant sections, allowed the researcher to transcribe portions – based on the template or coding frame. Although the tendency to data-binge is not untypical – yet the possibility of a data deluge researchers have been humorously cautioned – pose imminent risks of ‘death by data asphyxiation’ (Pettigrew 1988 cited in Eisenhardt 1989: 540).

The experience of traversing these phases of the case study design has demonstrated, even at this stage, that case study research is not easy. With the myriad considerations at play, not least of them how much data to collect (Eisenhardt 1989; Bassey 1999; Yin 2009; Stake 2005; 2006; Miles & Huberman 1994): ‘not too little, not too much’, as some experienced researchers have advised. On the other hand, the need for ‘considerable insight and judgement’ in following through the case study process (Bassey 1999: 60); leads the chapter to how analyses have been approached in this study.

3.6 The Stages in Data Analysis

Although, perceived as laboriously demanding – in attending to all the intricate processes of the case study – when adhered to, possibilities for achieving good quality case study are high. In this chapter, the study has outlined the methodological considerations and justifications for their use. As far as the case study (see Case Study Protocol in Appendix D) coverage has entailed: a) used multiple sources of evidence leading to ‘converging lines of inquiry’ and triangulation; b) considered the quality judgements to which methods, and the research at large, are held accountable; and, c) sampling decisions along with the selection of cases. In seeking the end point of the case study, it is fundamental to the conceptualisation of the methodology, that: firstly, there is a high possibility to match conclusions reached to initial proposed RQs; and as a measure of reliability, a chain of evidence to allow traceability, by an external observer.

By the nature of the multiple case study, the desire to replicate, literally, to another setting (the second case in this study), it was important that data analysis commenced promptly – ‘analyse-as-you-go’. This way, a sense of what was done in the first case was not lost on the researcher, as a background guide: although efforts were made not to pull data across cases. As a qualitative methodology, the case study holds highly, quality analysis in the same regards, as the earlier

processes followed. Specifically, Yin (2009) has advised on the need to: attend to all the evidence; consider major rival explanations; stay the course by not avoiding significant aspects of your case due to negative findings, for example; and finally the utilisation of prior expert knowledge. While the evidence will be considered in the case study chapter (Chapter Five), this concluding section of the methodology chapter intends to clarify the processing of the data (evidence) that permitted the core analyses to be made.

3.6.1 Transcription (Data Preparation)

Transcription has been defined variously, depending on the purpose to which the process is put: it entails translation of material; transformation of sound recordings to text; and sometimes involves multiple languages (Slembrouck 2007; ten Have 2007; Duranti 2007 all cited in Davidson 2009: 38). At its core, ‘transcription is a selective process reflecting theoretical goals and definitions’ (Ochs 1979 cited in Davidson 2009: 36). The foregoing definitions of the character of transcripts apply to this study. Using an interpretivist methodology, the density of data have involved various preparations – essential element of this being transcription. With lots of generated material (journal diary, field notes, interview notes, observation sheets, documents), at an analogous prenatal stage – they needed to be prepared – to deliver the data in a useable format; to allow further analyses. The time factor during field work, and the immersion in the settings, meant that just raw data were often collected; for later processing, which took place mostly away from settings.

In this study, transcribing has been applied with pragmatism: while all data have been considered not all the data have been transcribed. Some digital recorded interviews have been wholly transcribed; with others still being selectively transcribed based on its relevance to the study. All transcripts have been done manually by the researcher. This study has not used the complement of software to aid the process, besides basic Microsoft Word processing. This has ensured some closeness to the data; due to the intimately iterative nature of the process. By not applying the University licensed software packages (NVivo and SPSS), the study has not been affected. Accordingly, limiting transcription to a diligent optimum, did not diminish the quality of analyses, as all data were utilised by the extent to which they addressed themselves to the RQs. In support of this position, Flewitt (2006: 45) contends that ‘the researcher cannot reproduce all observed

interaction, but must analyse all data so that the passages selected for presentation are informed by analysis and interpretation of the complete data set’.

3.6.2 Coding

In the foreword sections of Johnny Saldana’s (2009) book – *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* – is an ‘anonymous’ statement: ‘I code, therefore I am’. Perhaps, this establishes the centrality of coding, or its utility value, to qualitative research, as one of the ways albeit not the only way, to analyse data (Saldana 2013; Strauss 1987). As a process, it marks a transition, as can be vividly gauged, from its positioning in the process of this research. With the data (field notes, interview records, observations) transcribed, a first level of analyses began: coding. Saldana (2009: 3) defines the process:

A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data. The data can consist of interview transcripts, participant observation field notes, journals, documents, literature, artifacts, photographs, video, websites, e-mail correspondence, and so on.

Contrary to claims of de-contextualisation, coding in this study, when viewed comprehensively, aided contextualisation of the data. As a means to make sense of the evidence therefore, it suited the case study data: the cyclically iterative processes of decoding layers of meaning, coding and recoding for categories engendered depth of interpretation. Qualitatively, making sense out of the non-sense. Further, coded data exhibit territoriality (claiming boundaries for their context); a tendency that implies that they are not ‘culturally/politically neutral’ (MacLure 2013: 167) but intelligibly entangled within ‘slices of social life’ (Saldana 2009: 15). In this case study, coding involved several processes as outlined by MacLure (ibid): 1) applying themes to sections of the corpus of data; 2) pattern searching and pattern matching; 3) naming and categorising; 4) and finally, reduction of complexity through the assembly of data into superordinate categories or concepts.

Philosophically, coding ensured that the researcher was constantly in the mind-set that the data (pieces of paper, recordings and other artefacts from the field work), represented empirical units of social organisation. In fact, these constituted social reality with ‘actors’, ‘activities’, at a certain ‘time’, and in a certain ‘place’ – all defining the contextual grounding of the coded data (Lofland et al. 2006: 121); the research remained contextually-hinged to its humanistic groundings. In this mind-set, coding was not allowed the dominance that tends to de-context human actions and values causing loss of meaning (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995). As a process, the proximal positioning, of the researcher within the iterations of coding and recoding had other benefits. With the reason for coding being analyses, ultimately the aim was being achieved concomitantly. The potentialities to contextualise meaning is further heightened by the ‘interpretive dominion over an enclosed field’ (MacLure 2013: 167).

Reminiscently, coding data for this case study has given affordances to relive the empirical experiences. Instinctively, codes given in this study contained tags with inherent references to original sources. In MacLure’s words, coding ‘takes you up’ to the abstract realm; and ‘takes you down’ to the empirical materials with which it has connections (ibid: 169). From experience the initial engagement with the data, beyond transcription, caused moments of indecision: coding when eventually commenced progressed the research to heights of comprehensibility. Suddenly, the initial coding assumed categories upon which analyses could be based: a reunion of the empirical and the theoretical once again via the ‘linguistic glue’ of coding (MacLure 2013: 176). Therefore, coding further instantiates the iteration between the literature, methods and the RQs.

During the process of coding, somethings gradually grow, or glow, into greater significance than others, and become the preoccupations around which thoughts and writing cluster. (MacLure 2013: 175)

In terms of categories, from preliminary codes of over 67 initial ‘first impression’ codes; coming from data sets in each of the cases studied, these have been condensed into 5 major themes as listed below. To offer an example of how Theme 1 below emerged: initial codes such as childhood, early childhood, age of enrolment, international actors – INGOs (UNICEF, UNESCO), Funders

– WB/IMF, colonialism, compulsory schooling, curriculum, global initiatives (EFA/MDGs), globalisation and research. The data expanded into these, based on its relationship with the literature review. These reductively coalesced into the major theme: *Early Childhood Care and Development as a Global Phenomenon*. As an interpretivist case study, these themes hold both theoretical and empirical significance. In fact, they are not just data; but pieces of evidence that have resonance and meaning within certain lived realities.

1. *Early childhood Care and Development as a Global Phenomenon*
2. *Developed World – Developing World Epistemic Interactions*
3. *Status Connotations in Childhood Geographical Positioning and Understandings*
4. *Indigenous Conceptions of knowledge, childhood, and the world*
5. *Mis/Understandings of the role of education: Localised meanings of a global phenomenon?*

In spite of these totalising themes; as an analytical principle this study stayed within context in fidelity with each of the cases studied. In the ensuing expansions and reductive exercise of coding, the nuances reflected in the themes highlight real experiences; as reflected in the initial propositions (depicted in the RQs). As coding leads to abstractions, it is imperative to regard highly contextual relevance: especially when meaning-making is the key objective. As a matter of fact, these themes relate to the RQs; as explained in the iteration between the thematic content of the theoretical literature and the empirical data (in Chapter Three).

3.6.3 Thematic Analysis of the Case Study Data

The data (evidence) from the case study – summarised and condensed by coding – in a coding frame provide a template for analysing the data. As the main themes have been categorised, it means that associations are possible with the eventual thematic analysis based on the bigger concepts that have emerged from the process. In this case study, data have been analysed thematically; this fits with the object to clarify the boundaries between phenomenon and contexts. By applying thematic analysis, in-depth interpretations become possible; as the focus is on depth of interpretation of a particular instance at a point in time.

3.6.4 Challenges with Data

From the encounter with the data thus far, some problems have emerged from this experience. Aside from the density of the data, and the plenitude of processes to make the data useable; there have been instances of frustration, with attempts to fit some data – manipulation – into particular categories. Some writers have hinted that however the researcher tried, some data always escape categorisation. MacLure (2013: 167–170) codifies these as data ‘offences’, during the coding process.

- i. In fidelity with their origins, often data appear ‘frozen’ in structures that create and comprehend them;
- ii. In the eventual attempts to seek meaning via coding, recoding and reductions into themes; the obsession with meaning remains interminable;
- iii. As indicated earlier, coding results in levels of abstraction unfaithful to context; and also holds the potential to undermine context;
- iv. Coding appears superfluous as it attempts to code that which is already coded by language;
- v. As certain ideas grow in importance, coding is promotive of hierarchies in its amplification of a ruling idea;
- vi. As seen in the exemplification of theme 1 – *ECCD as a global phenomenon* – earlier; coding enforces conscriptive relations among otherwise discrete units during categorization (age of enrolment, globalisation, WB and colonialism).

On the balance of the labour invested in the process – the reductionism resulting in five broad themes – created uncertainties of loss. With the continuing play with the data, these themes in a redemptive way rejuvenated during the cross-case analyses; thus given credence and reassurance of the worth of the case study research.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

As an interpretivist case study that sought contextual perspectives; this study naturally was an ethical undertaking. Equally, the adoption of some ethnographic processes – immersion within contexts, participant observation, and reflective journals – in an early childhood research made ethical considerations more pronounced. Of significance, on this human realm are issues of privacy, confidentiality, ownership, and other cultural considerations: these are the safeguards gatekeepers try to achieve. These are explained along the following scope: ethics within the research context; researching with children; and finally, the context and the self of the researcher.

3.7.1 Ethics in the Context of the Research

As a researcher within the social sciences; the very notion of the social connotes natural entanglements with lived realities. The issues of privacy, emotions, vulnerabilities, and intimacies that emerge from these social worlds; are inherently ethical undertakings. Similarly, in seeking to research such worlds – as a peer ‘social actor’ – an assumption is made of both mutually convergent and divergent ‘desires, effects, aspirations and investments’ (Detamore 2010: 168). In practical reality, this breaks down into a researcher/researched relationship: with the researcher pursuing an agenda informed by certain idiosyncrasies, even material in certain instances. Contrary to the assumed concord of desires, this emerging divergence instantiates a ‘pre-existing ethical positionality’ in the relationships among the researcher and the researched (ibid). Largely due to the involvement of human subjects, a research project such as this critically assumed an ethical dimension (Madison 2005; Detamore 2010).

In the conduct of this research, from the construction of the research through data generation to the analysis and reporting; these have essentially entailed various socials. Critical issues have entailed: the power relations; competing interests; authoritative voice; privacy; confidentiality; ownership and representation. At the minimum, the exhortation is for researchers to demonstrate respect, competence, responsibility and integrity. The realm of the researched hitherto undisturbed now appear disrupted by the researcher; in pursuit of a certain indeterminate end. To that end,

some have advocated the codification of rules – ‘Dos and Don’ts’ – to make research ethically compliant. As a researcher within a UK institution, I have consulted copiously with the British Educational Research Association’s (BERA) *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* (2011). This is one such attempt at a prescriptive position on educational research. BERA however insists that the codes are not to be regarded as ‘rules and regulations’ but as ‘tenets of best ethical practice’ (BERA 2011: 3).

As a researcher on early childhood, some academics revert to globally agreed precepts such as UNCRC 1989, as pre-existing standards that could guide ethical propriety (Lindsay 2000). As an institution within the UK, the University of Warwick insists on an approved *Ethical Approval Form* before fieldwork authorisation; which I completed in the second year of my study (see Appendix). It is by no means a unanimous position – the deontology of ethics. Hall’s (1952) assertion that the best of codified rules can always be broken; crooks take it for granted while the obliged resort to tick-box accountability. This research, in spite of this oppositional stance on codes, benefitted immensely by reflecting on these guidelines to achieve an ethically compliant research.

3.7.2 Researching with Children

Most researchers on children and childhood appear unanimously agreed on their involvement in research about children (Wyness 2012; Broström 2010; Sylva et al 2010; Griebel & Niesel 2002). Social research regardless of the age of participants are generally ‘intrusive’ (Lindsay 2000: 5). In specific relation with children, most agree that their involvement must arise out of a necessity to the execution of the objectives of the research (BERA 2011; Wyness 2012; Lindsay 2000; Lewis & Lindsay 1999). As my research involved preschool and early primary (ages 3 to 8), it became important to pay attention to other basic yet crucial factors such as language and speech. In an attempt to seek children’s views it becomes challenging if they lack either the receptive or the expressive ability to communicate. Flewitt (2006: 47) admonishes the avoidance of attempts at ‘pathologizing the absence of talk’. Naturally, these provoke a crisis of representation. My attempt to negotiate this challenge involved the use of photographs and a semi-structure to assist in the group interview situations with children. The pictures appeared needless as the interviewed progressed to the upper ages.

Even before contact with the children within their school contexts, consent letters were sent and approvals given; by schools in the first instance, and later by parents of child participants (See Appendix for sample of Consent Letter). On my part as a researcher my assurances of confidentiality to children were generally to a limited extent. As an adult the school authorities expected that issues bothering on harm were not concealed but reported to the appropriate authority. Thankfully, no such ethical issues presented during this research study. In the real world of child research such issues as consent and confidentiality prove inadequate; due to the requirement of continual assent by the child to participate. According to the BERA standards – Clause 8: ‘care should be taken when interviewing children and students up to school leaving age; permission should be obtained from the school, and if they so suggest, the parents’ (BERA 1992: 2) With the intent to interpret from the case study contexts; the eventual illuminations equally present both representation and ownership issues. Wyness (2012) raises children’s ontological standing in adult-centred environments that often result in their exclusion. It is quite striking that the world agrees on the precepts of Article 3 ‘best interest of the child’ and Article 12 on conditions of children in relation to the UNCRC 1989; yet significant ethical considerations on autonomy and justice remain elusive to children, within research contexts. With my research context within Ghana, attention naturally was equally on the local regulations that affected ethics and children. Article 25 of the Fourth Republican Constitution and the Children’s Act 560 highlight the positive standards that children are entitled to. Ghana is as well a pioneer signatory to the UNCRC in 1990; thus it is obliged to respect Articles 3 and 12 of the Convention.

In the conduct of this research, I faced an ethical dilemma: the context of research still applied aspects of corporal punishment to discipline children. Although, my presence affected staff attitudes; the ‘cane’ was always visible on the teacher’s desk as a deterrent. It was always difficult to work out limits to my involvement: this remained unresolved till I exited the contexts. As well, it remains unclear what the policy within GES is; a restriction of the use of such disciplinary methods to school leadership in the 1970s has entrenched the practice within schools (Agbenyega 2006).

3.7.3 The Context and the Self of the Researcher

The researcher as the major instrument of the research process equally brings to the research undertaking certain personal character. As a value-driven being, the researcher's idiosyncrasies entangle with the social worlds of others – especially the researched. In my particular case, I was researching within a familiar context: in my country and community of birth. While this assisted the research in some ways; it was fraught with ethical challenges. The choice of methodology – the case study – meant that some immersion within the context was necessary. However, the deep familiarity with the local environment implied that the research could be affected; with accusations of bias for example. Researchers have hinted at the need to estrange the familiar, by keeping a phenomenological distance. This way the researcher is able to question the hitherto commonplace assumptions. In the words of Foucault (cited in Moss 2001: 92): 'to show that things are not as self-evident as one believed'. In the two settings of the cases studied – Tamale and Yendi – most of the research took place within the school settings. While the communities were familiar to me, the schools were both new. Such unfamiliarity with the settings, not the wider contexts, allowed me to be able to maintain a professional relationship with the local settings. Equally, ECCD as practiced was a novel creation; it was not widely prevalent during my childhood days in the same community.

Generally, however, the personal effects that the researcher has on the research would not bias the findings: so long as one owns up to such familial relationships. The context of this research (in Northern Ghana) required reflexivity in relation to cultural protocols: for example, 'gate-keeping', as is consent, are nested within multiple, yet diffuse authority structures, in the cultures of the people of the Northern Region. Being regarded as a member of the community, the natural practice would be to confer consensual authority on me – the researcher. Such tendencies require the sorts of critical distance; to avoid biasing the research process and its subsequent validity. As a crucial element to achieving this, the researcher must have certain qualities and be trained. In this respect, researcher competence and supervision along with reflexivity on these interactional dilemmas are important considerations. Some researchers regard ethical considerations as imperative relative to the political sensitivities around subjects such as education (Lindsay 2000: 19). To this end, confidentiality, anonymity, privacy, respect, dignity and responsibility to participants and the society, must be foregrounded.

Chapter Three has engaged with the methodological issues that underpin this research study. Especially the philosophical, epistemological and ontological considerations that guided the choice of case study as a suitable method to aid the answering of the questions posed. Couched as a mixed methods study – with a survey preceding the case study; the pluralist methods augmented a plethora of choices, thus accelerating opportunities for triangulation. Cumulatively these have enhanced the reliability, validity and trustworthiness of this study. The next chapter (Chapter Four) will now devote attention to the Ghanaian Context.

Chapter Four

4.0 The Ghanaian Context and the Evolution of Early Childhood Education

This chapter is dedicated to the national and local context by highlighting the issues that particularise the Ghanaian context; especially in the attempt to conceptualise childhood. The argument is that in conceptualising childhood in global terms, there is something characteristically Ghanaian that needs to be accounted for. It is the view of this study, arising from the case study, that the global–local dynamics on ECCD instantiate both isomorphic and divergent tendencies. This chapter looks at the Ghanaian context from the socio-historical point of view as well as offering a brief introduction of the empirical studies of the context.

A summary of the perspectives of stakeholders suggest that Ghana's early childhood care and development is heavily influenced by elements external to the local context. Several reasons account for this: firstly, global discourses, often emerging from the global North, define childhood – as highlighted by the view of 'global politics shaping local childhoods' (Fleer et al. 2009: 1); secondly, the prevalent conditions between developed and developing countries are not the same and affect how conceptions emerge; thirdly, issues such as poverty, culture, context, histories, priorities and development stages commonly suggest deficits that promote the viewpoint of 'catching up' with the West (Wallerstein 1991); and finally, Giroux's 'border pedagogy' (1991: 28) is in accord with Rosaldo's (1989: 105) inhabited 'cultural borderlands' suggesting embracing otherness by crossing

social, cultural and even epistemic borders as a way for majority world realities to gain prominence. These reasons point consistently to seeing counter-cultures at play within the global–local dynamics. In the end, the view point of this study is in accord with Fler and colleagues’ stance that ‘conceptions of childhood and children’s development are worthless if they cannot be related to concrete practices in all their complexities’ (Fler et al. 2009: 3). It is these ‘concrete practices’ that this study, through the case studies, sought to elicit and examine to improve understandings on the nuances – as opposed to the privileged global particularisation – in the conceptualisation of childhoods.

4.1 Pre-Independence History of Education (Before 1957)

Pre-independent history of Ghana was characteristically dominated by colonial adventures and exploits by various Europeans (Portuguese, Dutch, Danes, and English among them). The reasons for these exploits beyond the economics and trade rationales varied. The most prominent among them was the view that European colonialists had the abiding duty to spread their version of civilisation to others less civilised: who were caricatured elsewhere as the ‘slaves, sinners and savages’ (Koonar 2014). Throughout most of the nineteenth century therefore, an enforced evangelical mission walked in tandem with colonialist zeal to change this. The mission, both spiritual and material, felt colonialism Christianity and commerce ‘could provide the will and the way to emancipate slaves, save sinners and souls and position backward societies on the path to civilization’ (Barnett 2011 cited in Koonar 2014: 541). This was the lot of countries in Africa, among them modern day Ghana: then under a suggestive colonial tag as the ‘Gold’ Coast. In

every instance of this mission, education was seen as the most strategic tool to achieve these goals.

In pursuit of the goals of colonialism, therefore the role of education was unquestionable. In colonial Ghana, the Basel Missionaries (from Switzerland) assumed the civilizing force of the 'mission' during the early 1820s: missionaries established schools and took pedagogic control over children. Frequently, reports and assessments of colonised children and their parents were often deemed unsatisfactory – on the scale of modernity and civilisation. Education of children was effectively deemed the most appropriate solution to rid children of all the 'heathen influences' (Shetty 2008 cited in Koonar 2014: 542). Although, there is documented evidence that traces the development of education back to the Portuguese colonisers (1529), a more systematic policy to widen education beyond the immediate 'mixed race' children (mullato children of the Dutch and Danish colonisers who came after the Portuguese) was made possible by the Basel missionaries, whose initial mission started in 1828.

Colonising forces regarded schools as the most effective 'means of spreading the Christian faith' (McWilliams 1959 cited in Morrison 2001: 25). For this reason and for financial considerations; it felt almost natural to defer this responsibility to the missions. In fact, the political wing of the colonial mission was in many instances prepared to subsidise and fund the efforts of the Christian missionaries. Although, there were common concerns in relation to the operational running of these newly opened schools, Governor Gordon Guggisberg, a colonial governor of the Gold Coast, was to remark later that while 'their Christian zeal' to open more schools

was commendable it ‘carried them further than their educational capacity’ (Guggisberg cited in Williams 1964: 294). This conflation of religion with the political; or the masquerade of evangelism as education is important in the understanding of later configurations of modern-day education policy formulations and practice.

On early years’ education, many missions followed the Basel Mission’s example. However, for three-quarters of a century, provision was minimal, with only a few infant schools created and kindergartens annexed to their primary schools (Morrison 2001). The colonial Education Department reports for 1900 included infant class enrolments of some 6,293 children (Morrison 2001: 25). This development gave impetus to subsequent developments in the education of children at the early years (from 2–5 years). McWilliams (1959: 61) gives further account of other significant policy events; such as a defined curriculum, and the testing and grading of children in the early years among others, thanks largely to the visionary leadership (Williams 1964: 290) of Governor Gordon Guggisberg (1919 – 1927). For the first time after nearly six centuries of colonisation, he was to recognise the general education of the colonised people as ‘The Keystone’ (as he titled his many addresses to the Legislative Council and later in a Book); while in another instance claiming that the school system was ‘rotten to the core’ (Guggisberg cited in Williams 1964: 290–291).

Subsequently, upon Independence on 6th March 1957, the successor government of the Convention Peoples Party (CPP) under the leadership of Dr Kwame Nkrumah, promulgated the Education Act of 1961. After all the token gestures on

early childhood education, and education generally under colonial rule, the 1961 Act ushered in a watershed moment for pre-school policy and provision; along with education in modern day Ghana generally.

4.2 Post-Independence History of Education (After 1957)

With a legislative framework now in place under the Education Act of 1961, the new nation of Ghana was now in control of education, as an independent country. Certainly, the destiny was now in the hands of indigenous Ghanaians to develop an education practice suited to satisfying its local needs. Crucially, early childhood education had become officially institutionalised and a Ministry of Education was created with a mandate to take charge of preschools, in place of the previous requirement to register with the Department of Social welfare (Acquah 1958; Oppong 1993). Within a period of four years (by 1965), a framework to designate and determine the character of early childhood education emerged. Children below the age of six years but older than four received education: while under four-year olds were said to be in professional care.

The Nursery and Kindergarten Unit (within the Ghana Education Service) assumed the mandate to register, control and evaluate ‘any preschool designed to give regular instruction to children below the age of six’ (Morrison 2000: 26). However, the Ministry of Social Welfare retained responsibility for the continued registration of crèches and nurseries, which supposedly were not in the business of education but simply offered day care services. To further embed provision and highlight the importance of early childhood education, the National Nursery Teachers’ Training Centre (NNTTC) was established; with a vision to expand its provision to other

parts of the country. Unfortunately, to date, the institution has not managed to achieve this. The established Universities in Ghana – University College of Education Winneba and the University of Cape Coast have provided some of this training of early years’ professionals and practitioners in early childhood courses.

The increasing understanding that childhood extends beyond the reductive attempts to limit it to education and schooling, resulted in the creation of the Ghana National Children’s Commission (GNCC) to support overall childhood development. The Commission was set up to serve as a focal point for advocacy on children’s issues (AFRC Decree 66, 1979). GNCC targeted the general welfare and development of children, and co-ordinated essential services for children. One of the specific objectives stated in the same Act (AFRC Decree 66, 1979) is to assist in regulating crèches and day care centres as well as help in assessing children for welfare entitlements. Like the challenging institutional placement of the early years, decision on where to attach the GNCC itself has vacillated from one Ministry to another. It is currently under the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection.

A significant feature of policy and provision is that, the choice of programmes (educational/academic or care) applied within settings determined the instrument of regulation. Music, movement, nature, environment, English language, vernacular, health, story reading, storytelling, cultural activities, and in some cases religious and moral education, were the learning programmes commonly adopted. Specifically, for day care centres, the Department of Social Welfare required that

they institute play as the dominant activity and include no academic work as part of their curriculum (Morrison 2000: 27).

Gradually, early years provision had taken hold and by 1972 nearly 352 centres had registered, serving 30,218 children (Morrison 2000: 27). In a mandate issued by the then military commission, it stated forcefully new expectations of early years provision in the Ghanaian educational system.

Before beginning formalized education, every child should have between 18 to 24 months of preparation and pre-disposition... Kindergarten: 18 to 24 months for the age group 4 to 6 years.... to provide opportunities for the overall personal development of the child through individual play and group activities; to predispose the child to conditions of formal education in order to accelerate the learning process during formal schooling.

(Ministry of Education 1974 cited in Morrison 2001: 27)

Although good and reliable data is scant, enrolment in the early years and preschool has increased and some figures place enrolment numbers at well over half-a-million children (Morrison, 2001) by the year 2000. This is attributed to the huge political momentum built up in the intervening years since Ghana returned to democratic rule in 1992. Locally, two main developments have fuelled the growth during this period; the 1992 Fourth Republican Constitution itself and the promulgation of the

Ghana Children's Act (560), as a response to the UNCRC of 1989. These global–local undercurrents are discussed within the body of the thesis.

4.3 The Journey to the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy of 2004

The Early childhood Care and Development (ECCD) policy of 2004 resulted from many years of attempts to provide for children and childhood in Ghana. Beyond the historical attempts, current policy discussions covered the contemporary efforts between 1993 and 2004. The history points to a long gestation period, and the resultant 2004 ECCD policy incorporated the various strands of experiences to date. In reference to the RQs for this doctoral research, the questions of a contextually appropriate ECCD policy, provision and practice in Ghana requires some comment here. Crucially, the essential features and framework within which the 2004 ECCD policy was constructed may offer pointers to these aspects of the research goals.

4.3.1 Undercurrents to the 2004 ECCD Policy in Ghana

While there exists evidence that some provision was made for children, institutionally, within the Ghanaian education system prior to the 2004 ECCD policy; such provision had no formal character. Equally significant is the characterisation and designation of the recent, rather than all the previous attempts, early childhood education programmes. The colonial attempts (up to 1957) along

with the dictates of the various successive governmental regimes (the 1961 Education Act; the 1979 AFRC Decree 66 among them) all appeared to tinker and offer token gestures to programmes. Such limited and gratuitous attitudes did little to address gaps. There are multiple reasons that account for this position: many years of colonisation obfuscated local capacity to grow an Early Year's Practice. Moreover, at the time of Independence in 1957, a four-year period to design an education policy to cater for the self-determined needs of a scantily educated population appeared problematic. Without the benefit of the privileged contexts of the West, it is problematic the kind of ECCD policy sought, especially one grounded in the realities of its desired African tradition and culture (Pence and Nsamenang 2008).

Because of the foregoing limitations, what resulted (as reflected in current ECCD policy) were copious yet desperate movements toward the very institutions from which independence was sought. As argued in this research: ECCD in Ghana is to globalisation what education was to colonialism. Pence and Nsamenang (2008: 34) assert that:

... independent African countries merely experienced a shape-shift from European colonialism to that of the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and INGOs, which began to systematically challenge the ways and means of the newly independent states and the citizens within them.

Critically, such heightened vestiges of colonialism inform the claims of the influence of the minority world on the schooling trajectories of children in the majority world. By the character of the policy, there is a perceived a-contextualisation – thus setting children up within global formulations contrary to their local daily lived realities. The accusation that Ghana's ECCD policy and practice captures more the elements highlighted globally, rather than an opportunity to ground practice within local realities is relevant in this context. Proponents of such critiques highlight what an intrinsically, contextually and culturally grown ECCD should entail. Considering the place or the ontology of children in African societies, an educational praxis ought necessarily to straddle the multiple realities of social roles, domestic duties and agrarian tasks (Pence and Nsamenang 2008). The ontology of children in such contexts, as in the case of Ghana, imply that institutionalised programmes do not attempt to de-contextualise these realities. Western notions of unbridled individual freedoms and child agency are only explicable within a labyrinth of social identity and expression, in indigenous contexts (Barnhardt and Kawagley 2008; Pence and Nsamenang 2008). In responding to the univocal Western-driven agendas to care for the world's children, Ghana's resultant policy deferred outwardly. This view reinforces the position that the relationship between the global and the local in the practice of ECCD, evince certain differences even while convergence appear to be the case in other instances.

In setting out to catch glimpses of global ECCD within local practice, the Ghanaian case provided a perfect example of an imitated ideal. In strongly gravitating to a more globally dominant framework of early childhood education, Ghana's ECCD policy epitomised a malaise already afflicting existing aspects of education policy,

provision and practice. Such 'naïve acquiescence' (Pence and Nsamenang 2008: 35) to Western-driven agendas based on perceived 'certainties and predetermined outcomes' fitting to their western contexts; ultimately lead to fractured results as they do not fit within local contexts (ibid. 38).

4.3.2 Conceptualising a Local ECCD Policy Framework

Theoretically, there remains the question of what constitutes the local. It is essentially the case that the global encompasses the whole universe demographically; therefore, to extricate 'a local' beyond a locale heralds a problem. In this study, however, Ghana is considered one of the outposts of the global. Without engaging systems theory, references to the local therefore imply that external to Ghana is a superimposed existence – the global: not as a replica but one with possibilities for its parallel character and form. In arguing that there is such a thing as global ECCD, this study assumes equally possibilities for local ECCD. While such an assumption does not deny the plausible fusion and hybridisation of elements of the global and the local: by character the local ought to depict a triumph of local contexts over global dominance, thereby retaining an outlook of an indigenously created phenomenon that is contextually meaningful (van Oers 2009: 217). Furthermore, it is instructive to note that in seeking a self-determined cause, as a nation, Ghana by seeking liberation (in March 1957) was desirous of a break with the swathes of colonial exploits and a new beginning. Across the African continent such nationalist sentiments and attitudes were conveyed through new national policies, among peer countries. Some half a century later, on the dawn of a new millennium, an African scholarly conference in January 2000 in Asmara,

Eritrea titled provocatively ‘Against All Odds’, the writers and scholars from across various regions of Africa declared:

Colonialism and neo-colonialism created some of the most serious obstacles against African languages and literatures... We identified a profound incongruity in colonial languages speaking for the continent... Africa must firmly reject this incongruity and affirm a new beginning... Decolonization of the African mind should go hand in hand with decolonization of the economy and politics.

(Asmara Declaration: 17th January 2000)

In particular, the major actors have included the United States of America and former European colonialists: coalesced into powerful international organisations – the United Nations (UN), the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Some commentators have remarked the astonishing speed with which the childhood agenda, over a period of a decade, catapulted from the shadows to visible prominence on the international stage (Pence and Nsamenang 2008). Others have appropriated this achievement to the might of these world powers: with some insisting that critically little has changed on the world scene in regard to power relations (Penn 2010; Nsamenang 2005; Pence and Hix-Small 2009).

Insofar as a local ECCD policy is concerned, the landscape for the journey to the 2004 policy have shown a pluralist outlook. From the research through the multi-sectoral and stakeholder consultations to the broad frameworks on policy, the

Ghana case showed the significant influences of the global outlook. Making a case for early childhood development in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), Pence and Nsamenang (2008) in tracking the developmental stages to various policies show that the global is never too far from the local. In most of Africa, both pre-UNCRC (before 1989) and the momentum garnered from the UN involvement (UNESCO and UNICEF specifically) post-MDGs, have been externally-driven.

In sum, the ferment that caused the enactment of a local ECCD policy, shows as many external influences as internal. Internally there is firstly, an increasing awareness of the importance of children and childhood and secondly an existing obligation in legislation (Ghana's 1998 Children's Act 560) along with the 1992 Republican Constitution. Finally, there is a complicated assumption that a streamlined multi-sectoral stakeholder ECCD sector would deliver on a strategy that mitigates poverty (Garcia et al. 2008). Globally, the significance of conventions such as the UNCRC in spite of its inherent contradictions galvanised world attention and action on children and childhood (Hartas 2008; 2010). Global interactions reflected in the many conferences on the world stage on children and childhood; as well as through the funding of research and publications highlight global emphasis on a childhood agenda. Ghana was not immune to these developments. As a developing country with interest on recognition internationally; the way it accounted for its younger ones locally, reflected on its reputation globally (Coe 2012). Moreover, attempts to link the brain, the child and economic development suggest that a developing country such as Ghana sees the delivery of national development goals (on poverty reduction for example) via the prism of education service delivery (World Bank 2013).

<u>Timeline from UNCRC to Ghana's 2004 ECCD</u>
1989 UNCRC (Ratified by most countries in 1990)
1990 United Nations Declaration on Education for All (EFA), Jomtien, Thailand
1990 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC)
1992 Ghana's Fourth Republican Constitution
1993 Multi-stakeholder National Seminar (GNCC, UNICEF, GNAT, Danish INGO)
1995 WB ECD Consultant (Kate Torkington) lead a Five-Day Workshop by GNCC
1998 Ghana's Children's Act 1998 (Act 560)
2000 The Dakar Framework on EFA (Six Key Goals)
2000 Change of Government in Ghana (New Decisions on Framework/Coordination)
2004 New Government create Ministry of Women and Children to host ECCD and GNCC
2004 Office of the President assents to ECCD Policy for Ghana

Table 2.1 Local and Global Developments on ECCD

From the foregoing attempts to construct a local ECCD policy, it would appear that what results from such global–local engagements are essentially exemplars of the global on the local. The seeming futility in the process exuded by the angst that beckon a break from colonialism, gathers further complexity in the inability of countries like Ghana to incorporate their local tradition and culture into ECCD, or even their capacity to grow an ECCD practice germane to its context and circumstance. Garcia and colleagues (2008: 196) highlight this dilemma:

Historically, the ECCD policies were developed as a result of the realisation of inadequacies in the inherited systems characterised variously as not holistic but mainly cognitive, ad hoc, and full of inadequacies among social groups... This awareness, along with both internal legislation and international obligations... prompted the initiation of the current policies...

Such limitations seek resolution at two levels; considering that ECCD is equally an education system. This study, as others, could reflect a certain wholeness in approach: yet recognising that meaning is context-based and therefore, knowledges and learning must promote 'cultural meanings' as well as make 'personal sense' (van Oers 2009: 217). Secondly, the world is interdependent, relational and dynamic. As a result, early childhood development research must seek to conceptualise children 'in their everyday activities across nation-states, institutional borders and local settings' (Fleer et al. 2009: 10).

4.3.3 Childhood in the Context of Northern Ghana

Childhood is context-specific with varied contexts giving meanings that are not universal. In relation to contextual relevance of ECCD, it is the understanding within this study that a child raised in northern Ghana retains something peculiarly northern. The Ghanaian child with all its universal connotations only exudes clarity in meaning when derivatives of contexts are brought to bear on the concept. Therefore, northern childhood (a child raised within northern Ghana) while consonant with other childhoods elsewhere retains peculiarities of its context. This

study has sought to highlight the significance of context to the study of childhoods: by problematising the oft-repeated globalised universalisms of a particular 'child'. The idea that childhood everywhere is the same; hence the insistence on a template of a global child needs to be challenged. This section of the thesis intends to establish the relevance of context if childhood has to have any meaning.

4.3.3.1 Elements of Childhood Contexts

From the foregoing positioning of childhood, this section will dwell on the significant elements of childhood that distinguish one childhood from another. Particularly relevant in this situation are the following:

- a) Childhood meanings based on context and culture
- b) Upbringing and Training of children
- c) Social positioning and locus of the child
- d) Roles and relationships among members of society: the child, the parent, the adult, society and government
- e) External influences: systems analysis of how the global is in the local and vice versa

4.3.3.2 Childhood Meanings based on Context and Culture

As has been suggested, there is a sense that while childhood has been conceptualised in the global sense, local and cultural meaning-making systems offer the due contextual basis on which childhood can be understood. Such meaning-making systems constitute the foundations upon which northern and Ghanaian

childhoods are based. Goody (1973) in her anthropological works based in the Northern Region of Ghana, among the Gonja tribe, situate the conceptualisation of childhood within the family setting – ‘context of kinship’. The author suggests that for a deeper understanding of the child or childhood there is the need to defer to the ‘conjugal bond’ that defines the relationship between a parent and a child. In such a relationship Goody like Fortes, in his anthropological study of the Tallensi (1945) in the North of Ghana, highlights the reciprocal basis on which northern societies and communities tend to function, thus constituting the basis for communal claims to ‘social parenting’ (Goody 1973: 8), a further exemplification of the ‘unity of the social sphere’ (Fortes 2008: 36). For both researchers one definitive characteristic of social organisation is evident in the gregarious attitudes among tribes in the North of Ghana. As has been highlighted in this study, while children are born to parents biologically, the tag and responsibility of parenting materialises socially.

The Ghanaian child grows up under the direct surveillance, not only of his parents, but also of his other relatives, both those living in the same compound and those living nearby. Grandparents, uncles, aunts, other relatives and even friends of the parents, all feel some degree of responsibility...towards the upbringing of the child, and all participate...in the process. (Kaye 1962: 153)

This sense of reciprocity forms the ideological basis upon which the future trajectories of the child depends. In fact, as a child of the social parent, the consensual task of society is to fashion out an effective and productive member of

the community. Hence, from early childhood children participate in many aspects of the lived experiences of the community. In Fortes' study among the Tallensi, he emphasized the fact that tasks are developmental: 'a child is never forced beyond its capacity' (2008: 35). Equally, with all the regard for the pivotal role agriculture plays in such communities – and the essential labour requirements – children only work based on the limits of their age and skill. According to Fortes, this *laissez faire* approach to teaching skill and learning by the young imply that: 'children are rarely unwilling to learn. As a rule, too, they are not ashamed of confessing failure, ignorance, or inability to do or make something' (2008: 36). These contextual attitudes hold some relevance when it comes to systems of educational practice that are deemed culturally appropriate; if children are not to be alienated from their sociogenic connections.

In his work 'Bringing Up Children in Ghana' Barrington Kaye (1962) analyses the norms associated with certain behaviours associated with children and childhood. Children in Kaye's view, based on a study of communities in both the North and South of Ghana, present a resource for present benefit; and at the same time there are expectations for reversal of roles between the child and the parent. This remains a key feature of social organisation. Essentially, parents engage in the training, sponsorship and the enhancement of social status of children so that in the future the children get good jobs to look after them. For the present benefits, the child as young as two is taught the habits of doing errands; and by ages four to eight both boys and girls engage in domestic work at various levels. Generally, these tasks range from sweeping the compound and the surroundings, fetching and carrying water from dams and other sources, help on the farms by picking firewood or even

attending to the fire while the adults engage in farm labour, petty hunting for birds especially among boys, or for the girls helping to nurse younger siblings or pound the ingredients during cooking, among others. There is a sense of reciprocity in the way childhood is conceptualised in relation to parenthood: whereby the child is looked after by parents to a point where the parents are looked after by the child.

The almost-universally held view in Ghana towards parental responsibility and filial gratitude is that, in return for bringing up their children, parents have the right to expect support from them in old age and the provision of a fitting burial. The having of children is therefore widely regarded as a form of insurance against old age and obsequial neglect. (Kaye 1962: pp. 148–149)

For the people of northern Ghana, as a largely agrarian community, the priority to eke out a certain competent praxis among all members of the community is the very essence of the life worlds sought by these communities. Moreover, deficits perceived due to unaccomplished responsibilities of the parent while condemned are shared socially, to a certain extent.

In her works, Goody (1973, 1982) offers further insights on the nuances presented by this conceptualisation of childhood. Writing on the tasks of parenthood, Goody (1982: 16) defined the following as essential in the reciprocal relationship between the parent and the child:

- a) The parent is endowed with bearing and begetting
- b) Responsible for nurturance
- c) Training
- d) Sponsorship and endowment with civil birth status – which often materialises socially.

Children are expected to submit to the upbringing pattern of often delegation, sharing, succession or transfer of ‘physiological parenthood’ (Goody 1982: 10–14). Childhood as conceived in this sense, entails education and training of some sort, which necessarily engender some element of ‘constraint’, ‘authority’ and ‘discipline’.

- a) Obedience and respect are key to the nurturance associated with childhoods in northern Ghana. It is strongly recognized, that the child owes the provisioning parent – biological and social – obedience and respect. This is enforced without age barriers, with reprimands handed out accordingly, based on a child’s level of understanding. In the growing up process, the philosophy of ‘respect thy father and thy mother’ is exemplified in the requirement to greet parents and elders. Goody (1973: 172) observed among the Gonjas that children, as long as they lived in the same village with their parents, had to greet them at night and in the morning.
- b) The element and responsibility of respect and obedience is extended to another practical realm in the parent–child relationship. From the growing up phase of life, as a member of the community, a child is tutored in the art of caring for parents. Among the Dagombas and other tribes of northern

Ghana they share the proverb that: parents look after you, so you grow teeth; in order that you look after them to lose their teeth. Failure to adhere can herald sanctions of curse or threats of withholding and abandonment by the parents and the larger society. Goody (1973: 172) observed that providing food for parents was a classic example of this duty to the parent: the Gonja tribe required the child to 'send a leg of any animal killed to a parent who is living in the same village'.

- c) The clustering of parent roles has other implications for the relationship among children in the household. For example, the prevalence of cultural behaviours such as fostering and siblinghood (Goody 1982) present childhood in terms contrary to Western developmentalist conceptualisations. Rather than view children as immature on a trajectory to maturity – teleologically, the 'northern childhood' is one that has perceived accomplished relevance to the general society both in the here and now, as well as in the future. In simpler terms, the utility value of the child is perceived by the 'non-parent' when delegation of the roles of the parent are done either by a recipient family, during fostering; or even when it is the case that parenting is happening at the social realm.

4.3.3.3 Upbringing and Training of children

While schooling and education has become widely pervasive as a feature of daily lives in Ghanaian society; there is a certain attitude to public education that suggest a need for aligning phenomenon to context. For example, northern society as seen from the foregoing, function on the full complement of all members – children and adults – participating in social life. It is thus a common feature to routinise

seamlessly the domestic chores children are assigned with schooling. Before leaving for school, children have to discharge part of their responsibilities such as sweeping, fetching water, washing dishes, cooking and doing errands: and the same work is repeated once children return home from school.

While formal education is welcome positively by many, parents grudgingly share children with the space allotted to school. This engenders a transactional relationship between such societies and schooling: implying that education is important insofar as it fulfils the opportunity cost of cultural tutoring and learning as well as the material needs that suffer due to school attendance. The deferred utility to be derived from dedicating childhood to schooling is a perceived luxury. As everyone has a certain role to play within the social sphere, schooling impacts – if not distorts – the order of social organisation. For illustration, ‘cowherds are always boys, whereas it is the girls who help with the housekeeping’ (Fortes 2008: 36). Generally, there are gendered roles assigned children even during early childhood. Boys often are associated with chores that adult men handle; and girls identified mostly with chores that prepare them as future wives and mothers. The immediate effect of the competition for the child’s role between home and school reflects in the denial of schooling opportunities for young girls. There is a negative view associated with educating girls as it may only lead to ‘pregnancy, laziness, fancifulness and to their not knowing how to cook’ (Kaye 1962: 182). As a result, ‘more boys are sent to school than girls because of the idea prevalent in most villages that it is useless educating girls, as they always end up in the kitchen’ (ibid: 182).

Barrington Kaye (1962: 181) in his study of upbringing of children in Ghana revealed that ‘the money expended upon schooling is regarded as a form of investment, which is expected to pay dividends when the child is in a salaried job’. He outlines the following as the motives for schooling:

- i) the increase in social status which attends having educated offspring,
- ii) the direct value of such children...to illiterate parents,
- iii) the supervision in school of troublesome children.

One of the key features in the conceptualisation of childhood in the Ghanaian and northern sense relate to the ways of upbringing and training. ‘In all parts of Ghana, children help their parents at those tasks which they will themselves undertake as adults’ (Kaye 1962: 195). In the West, childhood especially in the early years, faces almost no competition with such defined elaborate tasks associated with the Ghanaian context. It is not surprising, therefore, that in such developed societies children and childhoods are easily accounted for within the realm of education and schooling. Part of the reasoning that make this possible is lacking in developing world contexts, in the ways that they are taken for granted in the developed worlds. Prout (2005: 141) suggests that ‘schooling in rich countries is a central means by which children are sorted and distributed into the system of social rewards’. In the Ghanaian, and northern Ghanaian context however, while attendance at school is expected, the school as the central location for children – if enforced – will egregiously exclude many. The participative nature of indigenous communities as presented here, implies that the content of nurturance and upbringing are defined by their relevance to the lived experiences of the society. Citing the works of other

researchers (Cohen 1976; Gay & Cole 1967), Goody (1982: 209) underscores the ill-alignment of Sierra Leone's Creole tribal children's lived realities, for example, with the life they encounter on entry to school.

For the tribal child, school marks what must be a strange disjunction, for here he meets for the first time not only English language but reading and writing and arithmetical calculation and formal abstract reasoning.

Similarly, flowing from this discussion and based on anthropological works (Kaye, 1962; Goody 1973 & 1982; Fortes 2008; LeVine 2008), the northern Ghanaian child is faced with a new frontier in its development. A child who prior to enrolment into schooling could freely wonder and play and had permission to fail without the burden of mastering a staged learning programme. Suddenly, the same child is constrained to a seat to stay still and learn abstract subjects farther from the cultural learning paradigm grounded in real craft. Moreover, the new school environment with its 'pedagogical structure of classrooms similarly suggests the view that children have limited abilities and knowledge' (Coe 2012: 133). Dahlberg (2005: 6) decries the strict enforcement of a Western developmentalist telos-driven early childhood development in contexts such as Africa. In concord with this view, Pence and Nsamenang (2008: 38) highlight the agendas entailed in Eurocentric models of child rearing with its 'certainties and predetermined outcomes'. Arising from these issues, many see a point of convergence in the various epistemes – the Western and the Indigenous

– through generative knowledges that blend and incorporate these worlds of knowledges. Therefore, in deciding what an African early childhood development (ECD) programme ought to look like, Pence and Nsamenang (2008: 39) proposed the following elements:

- a) Social ontogeny
- b) Self-identity and sociogenic relevance; including the self as social identity
- c) An African developmental niche framework
- d) Invocation of contextual theorists
- e) Constructivism
- f) Hybrid processes
- g) Post-structural and post-modern critiques
- h) Cultural psychology

Critically, the framework set above by Pence and Nsamenang (ibid) reveal an inherent desire for generative content that serve to nurture a whole-being to become a fully-fledged and productive member of the society. In Ghanaian society children learn by doing, from younger years, through assigned daily chores so that they achieve mastery by adolescence (Fortes 1938; Kaye 1962).

4.3.3.4 Social positioning and locus of the child

Childhood in northern Ghana, and Africa for that matter, is nested within a labyrinth of social relationships. The demands of a communitarian and participative

society imply that childhoods of such contexts follow the prioritised cultural and contextual appropriated lived realities. Contextually, the reciprocities of livelihoods suggest that the preparatory process to become a productive member of society define agency. Depending on the phase of life therefore, hierarchical attitudes prevail: the child as inferior to submit to parenting and give respect and obedience, the adult as the authority figure, at the same time competent and superior.

As a child matures, its abilities and needs change, as does its participation in the world outside the family. The training...in early childhood...the same for boys and girls: the learning of language, impulse control, and cultural gesture and idiom is broadly similar for children of both sexes. But older children...are increasingly expected to develop according to the norms appropriate for members of their own sex. (Goody 1982: 13)

In the earlier classification of roles among children and parents, it was evident that the burden of deference lay with the child, culturally. These attitudes define the character of the household, school environments and the society generally. Coe (2012: 132) is emphatic on the prevalence of these hierarchies that characterise child – adult relationships. To illustrate this point, Coe uses the school context and the relationships among teachers, children and the delivery of learning and knowledge.

In the school context, in Ghana, young people appear to lack authority and agency. Most of the control on all aspects are exercised by the adults in the school – teaching, catering, discipline and administrative matters. By the same token,

‘teachers are positioned as competent knowers, sources of information, and children and young people are the receivers of this information’. For the passive recipients of such knowledge, ‘lessons are organised around the transmission of official knowledge through methods emphasizing note-taking, rote memorization, and oral and written regurgitation’ (Coe 2012: 132). In the sense that agency or the lack of it is instantiated by this exposition, children merely inhabit similar worlds whether they are away for school, or they are at home with parents. Similar to the ways that parents exercise authority at home over subjected children, the teacher is the ‘intellectual giant whose great authority should be respected’ (Kaye 1962: 186). Fortes (2008: 36) narrates attributes that characterise parent-child relationships: cooperation, friendliness, tolerance, and ‘almost equality’. He insists however, that ‘a parent’s authority may not be flouted’. To an extent that children even for discipline could receive their punishment at school with more severity for ‘misdemeanours committed at home’. By the same token, the child could be punished at home for ‘poor performance at school’ (ibid: 188).

4.3.3.5 Roles and relationships among members of society: the child, the parent, the adult, society and government

Flowing from the discussions on context so far, the definition of roles as a critical determinant of the space for children and childhood is one area of contestation, in the conceptualisation of childhood. Children have been associated with playing replica roles, while serving their ‘apprenticeship’ to adulthood. The role sharing in the society suggests that ‘children receive their education not only from the adults

but also from older children and adolescents'. A critical feature is that mastery of skill is never enforced as a rule:

Increasing skill and maturity, therefore, bring increasing responsibilities but also concomitant rewards – that is ever closer integration into the system of cooperation and reciprocity which is the basis of Tale domestic economy. (Fortes 2008: 38)

As subservient subjects to adult controls, the child-adult caricature becomes confounded when certain situations unsettle the norm. Citing the distortion to traditional parenting resulting from the HIV/AIDS epidemic among 11 Southern African Development Cooperation (SADC) countries, Kelly (2000) highlights the dilemma that faces the Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC). Their study highlights the need for renewed appropriation of roles especially when perceived as an essential criterion for triaging children from adults in African societies. The sudden conversion of children into 'child-adults' has scuttled the hitherto stable constructions of childhoods based on prescribed or even circumscribed roles.

The governance structures rely on traditional hierarchies with some regard paid to royalty or ruling groups. The Northern Region is a predominantly Muslim community: the community structure would normally consist of a traditional chief of the village, who has his Imam (as his spiritual guide and part of the royal court) and then the commoners in the society. The ubiquitous community upheavals of recent memory in the northern part of Ghana have been conflicts arising out of succession among the qualified ruling groups. It is essentially the case that

traditional and smaller communities often show more deference to the village chief – as a source of authority – relative to state or governmental control. It is therefore a common feature of the administrative structure to see chiefs adjudicate and arbitrate on marital issues, witchcraft, theft, and other issues that border on the welfare and wellbeing of the community.

4.3.3.6 External influences: systems analysis of how the global is in the local and vice versa

The central theme of the thesis is the global–local dynamics that impact on the conceptualisation of early childhood care and development in Ghana. In the main, the claim made in this research is that the global has heavily influenced the local in the decisions on choice of ECCD model. Within the two case study settings, it was evident that such influences engineer both isomorphic trends as well as disjunctive relationships. The attempt in this study is to establish context and contextually appropriate conceptions of childhood: with the quest for foregrounding childhoods within their cultural meaning-making systems. Freitas and colleagues (2009: 288) in their rendition of the local Brazilian nuances despite globalism insist that:

We believe that in order to understand the global-local tension involved in implementing early childhood care and education policies in any society, it is essential to know the history of that society, given that the changes that take place are always a transformation of what had been and not a simple substitution of the old by the new.

For this to be a reality, other researchers have proffered the local as the dominant context. Bang (2009: 180) hints at ‘developmental novelties’ with ‘two presences’ at its core: i) the presence of things and people in a specific context, and ii) presence of ‘absence of societal processes’. With such novelties, possibilities for seeking out divergence and congruence are enhanced. As an educational system, ECCD as conceived and practised in Ghana cannot be divorced from the global template. Be that as it may, the local while constrained need not be an inferior replica of the external – the global. Equally, if the intent is transformation of what exists already and not substitution, then the local becomes as significant in the meaning-making systems as the global. By this analysis, contextual relevance for ECCD is secured, as the chasm between local context of practice and the global phenomenon (ECCD) is narrowed.

Thus far, the explications rendered critically signal the unavoidable positioning of the child within context. A child as a product of context belongs to a place and time; with meaning drawn from a certain cultural underpinning, a way of training and upbringing, by dint of location within a certain social system. Definitions and meanings are made thereof for such constructs as a child, a parent, the adult, society and governments. These gain further prominence when escalated to the global, where the conflation of these constructs results in a fuzziness in local understandings that otherwise warrant contextual emphasis.

Childhood depends on context and culture: Essentially, commentators and researchers on childhood (Goody 1973, 1982; Burman 1998; Andersen-Levitt

2006) converge on the proposition that childhoods insofar as they originate within particular social realms elicit meaning within the machinery of associated social structures. Burman (1998) provides a framework which heightens the understandings that relate to how childhood can be analysed. Childhood as: i) a life stage, ii) a writing style, iii) metaphysical quality, iv) a synonym for creativity, v) integral with culture, vi) political subject or object. The use of the case study –and the emphasis of the Research Questions on phenomenon and context –has provided a vantage position to deepen the understandings in the global–local dynamics on the subject of early childhood care and development.

Essentially, the societal and cultural systems of the people of northern Ghana highlight the need to temper the dominant global constructions of childhood relative to context. Children raised in northern Ghana, while they share some commonalities with their southern peers, and by extension other global representations, retain some relevant characteristics that are uniquely northern. Equally, we are reminded that existence is not an individual affair (Barat 2010) which suggests that the latter point about convergence offer two possible positions. There is the assumption that every childhood regardless of context shares a certain commonality with other childhoods; biological, physiological but also pertinent global norms such as ways of upbringing, nurturance, schooling and education. The other element to the convergence claim relates to the increasing universalisms and isomorphism of institutions and cultures; thus, causing the habitation of ‘cultural borderlands’ (Penn 2010) as opposed to compartmentalised and ‘island cultures’.

As seen from the study of the two cases in the northern region – NECE and GECE – education and schooling offer an apt summation of the two possibilities (of congruence and disjunction). Kathryn Andersen Levitt highlights this position in ‘Global Schooling Local Meaning’. The global acceptance of public schooling as an avenue for the upbringing of the child is context-neutral. Both Yendi and Tamale schools instantiate the attempts to make schools the central locus for children. Divergently however, both NECE and GECE pointed out to a large extent the place of context in the child’s life. On deciding an ECCD model the lived realities of the child is critical. Therefore, the daily transition from home to school in a repeated cycle provides a case for the recognition of other than school factors and elements when trying to understand the real child. Such elements constitute the local meaning-making machinery.

4.4 The Two Cases Studied

This research took place in two settings in the Northern Region of Ghana in order to study the workings of global ECCD especially as it affected the local context. The two sites contextually named in fitting with the two predominant royal settings (Gukpegu and Naaya) that have resonance with the lived realities of Dagombas – the major tribe in the northern region. Gukpegu Early Childhood Experimental School (GECE School) and Naaya Early Childhood Experimental School (NECE School).

4.4.1 Case Study One – Gukpegu Early Childhood Experimental School

Gukpegu Early Childhood Experimental School (henceforth GECE School) is a private educational institution located within a relatively well-off (by local standards) suburb of Tamale, in the Northern Region of Ghana. It was established in 1993, by an educationist and public advocate for women's rights and the girl child. The school defines its mission as follows: the school sees its role as providing high quality education; as a safe haven for children; as a lifeline to the underprivileged children; and providing employment opportunities for the young, to complement government's efforts in education. In a school profile document, GECE School rates itself as a successful education provider; starting with just about 20 pupils and now with a current population of nearly 1500 children. Within school it continues to support children who become orphaned while in school – a current total of 43 children continue attendance without the burden of paying fees. There is an apprenticeship scheme for youngster through work placement which offers skills training for needy young people. Most important of all, the core provision through daily operational facility for effective preschool and basic education.

In terms of its location, GECE School is sited off the busy Government departments' enclave: the Police Headquarters, the Courts, the Tamale Central Hospital, residential estate for public sector workers, as well as some shops (and small stalls) along the way. As enrolment is not based on residence within the catchment, children come from all parts of the Tamale Metropolis and beyond. As one of the pioneers in the provision of ECCD – coalesced locally into 'G8 Schools' – its structure and fees (though typical among its peers), appear to cater for an affluent few compared to other providers, within the metropolis.

In terms of its locus, policy and regulation, the school is private but registered with government authorities: The Registrar General's Department in Accra (the Capital City of Ghana), the Ghana Education Service (GES), and as a requirement for preschool provision – registered with the Department of Social Welfare. GECE School has provision covering enrolment from crèche through Primary six; and a recently added provision for progression to Junior High School (KG through JHS 3 commonly called basic school), on the same site. Preschool provision caters from birth to age 5/6 at Kindergarten (KG): running two streams – Nursery 1 A&B; Nursery 2 A&B; KG 1 A&B; KG2 A&B – with class sizes of two teaching staff to forty children (2:40). The dual stream narrows to a single stream from the start of Primary 1 (at age 6); a situation the school has indicated it is trying to address due to the pressure on placement at the commencement of basic compulsory education. In its routine educational practice, the school applies a curriculum for all stages from the Ghana Education Service (GES). This is in fulfilment of its registered status as a basic education provider (KG to JHS 3). The curriculum guidelines are partly customised at the preschool level following guidance from the GES.

Following a daily routine (Monday to Friday), the preschool children get dropped off at the centre from 7.00 am and expected pick up commences usually at 2.00 pm and latest by 5.00 pm. Compulsory basic school (P1 to JHS 3) starts from 8.00 am and closes at 3.00 pm. The day will normally begin with an Assembly (separate for Preschool except on Friday mornings) of teaching staff and school children within the courtyard of the basic school. Timetables vary in flexibility between preschool and basic school: but are generally calibrated as six blocks of 45 minutes to an hour.

To conform to GES standardised subject classification, the school teaches according to the syllabus or curriculum prescribed by the government agency – Ghana Education Service. These are often tweaked to assist teaching at preschool levels: however, evidence from the case study points to an apparent attempt to push down primary school content to preschool. Among others, this is due to an understanding that preschool children ought to be primary school ready, on entry at Basic 1. Another reason is the attempt to whittle down numbers for placement in primary; via competitive assessments demanding higher level skills from children. Table 5.1 below reflects the trend to calibrate preschool subjects to increasingly reflect what awaits at primary school.

Preschool Time Table Subjects	Basic school (Focus on P1 and P2)
Language Numbers Environmental Studies Story Time Science Creative Art French ICT Dagbani	English Mathematics Science Citizenship Education French Dagbani Computer Creative Art Physical Education Pre-Technical Skills Religious and Moral Education
Ghana Education Service Curriculum	GES Curriculum
Psycho-social skills (self-confidence and assertiveness) Language and Literacy Mathematics Environmental Studies Creative Activities Nutrition and Safety Health	English Language Mathematics Integrated Science Religious and Moral Education Information and Communication Technology Social Studies French A Ghanaian Language (offered locally) Basic Design and Technology

Table 5.1: Subjects for Preschool and Basic School (Primary & JHS)

As its overarching vision GECE School sees itself as ‘A Model School of Excellence that develops the talents of the human person for the growth of the region, the country and beyond’ (n.d. School Profile Document). With long periods of immersion within the case school (approximately two months), its naturalistic character featured operationally among;

staff, children, the school building and environment, the learning and educational experiences, and the cumulative relationships that prevailed within these arenas. These are descriptively analysed to achieve depth and contextual understandings of the case school, in Chapter Five – the case study section of this thesis.

4.4.2 Case Study Two – Naaya Early Childhood Experimental School (NECE School)

Naaya Early Childhood Experimental School (NECE School henceforth) is a privately-owned faith-based Basic School. It is located within the Yendi Municipality which is about 91 kilometres (approximately 58 miles) from Tamale, the Northern Regional Capital town. The school is set within the community that is basically rural, despite its semi-urban classification. As a basic school, it comprises of a preschool and a primary school within the same setting. Initially started with about twelve students, in 2008, the school now has on its roll of students over 600 children. NECE School is sited among a community of schools on the outskirts of Yendi, in proximity to the village of Kugu. The Kugu village, as Yendi itself holds traditional and cultural relevance for locals; due to its nexus to the traditional chieftaincy of Dagbon. The Yendi municipality plays host to the paramount chief – the Yaa Naa (overlord) of the Dagbon traditional area. This school is therefore essentially sited within a locality steeped in tradition and culture.

By its outlook, NECE School sees itself as a faith-based privately-owned school. The school enjoys the support of the Baptist Convention in Ghana and abroad: its founder describes himself as a missionary on a mission to do what Jesus would have done if he encountered Yendi. Although, Yendi is predominantly Muslim, the founder (a Ghanaian Baptist

Missionary) believed that education, as previously used by other missions, was the surest way to reach out to advance the gospel and win souls for Christ. As a researcher, curious about this missionary zeal, it emerged that this school was over-subscribed – despite the fact parents signed up to a declaration (of faith) that the school functioned on a Christian ethos. The success of NECE School, in the words of the proprietor, ought to be judged on the four developmental realms that marked Jesus's own life story. In an interview, the Proprietor of NECE School quoting St Francis of Assisi – 'Preach the gospel if necessary use words', insisted that:

The Gospel is the foundation for NECE School: Jesus grew up in Wisdom (intellectual development); Stature (physical development/good heart and sound mind); favour with Man (social competence); and favour with God (spiritually sound) (Luke 2: 52)...Mbiti insists that the African is intrinsically religious or spiritually...in every sense from the cradle to the grave.

NECE School is registered as a basic school with the Ghana Education Service (GES). Although private, it adopts the regulatory framework of the GES. The curriculum pursued leads to the same statutory standardised test – Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), at the exit point of basic school. The school, on its foundation experimented with the founder's own children (four girls) along with a few other children. By the first examination diet, NECE School had established its niche, as most of the candidates had passed the examinations (BECE). Its building style, housed in a typical compound house – currently a rented property, allows for proximal contact suited to the developmental needs of the children. Also, with a different approach, NECE School offered a school feeding (hot meals) programme for children, mostly an element of government (public school) provision in poor and deprived schools. This always had a communal feel about it: all children were

scheduled periodically, from the youngest, to sit on the floor or squat and eat their meals together, similar to their natural behaviour at home. The founder indicated that this nutritional element supported the biblical wisdom of growing in stature.

As a school routine, NECE School expects children to arrive at 7:30 am: with varying closing times between preschool and primary school – at 3:00 pm and 4:00 pm respectively. The preschool arrangements start from the age of 3: with classrooms named after the founder's children. Provision is mainly for ages 3–4, 4–5, 5–6 years (six rooms of A&B arrangement); Staff–child ratio of 1:25; and seatwork of rows of desks in groups all facing the direction of the teacher at the front. At early primary (Primary 1 and 2) classes ran a dual stream (A&B); following GES subjects among them English, Mathematics, Science; and Staff–child ratio of 1:40, in most cases. Timetables for lessons show a variation between preschool and primary (between 30 minutes to 1 hour): preschool operates a loose schedule; with clearly defined times at primary covering five subjects in a day. Every day starts with an Assembly of the whole school: the students say their pledges to the Ghana Flag, the Holy Bible, and the Christian Flag. They sing a couple of songs and march to a drum-beat to start their classes.

For this doctoral research, NECE School was pursued as a replication case study: with the first case completed within GECE School in the Tamale Metropolis. In all, this lasted for a period of 7 weeks. Such an extensive immersion within NECE School allowed the observations of the *staff*, *children*, the *school* and environment, the *educational experiences*, and overall the interconnected *relationships* that prevailed within these arenas.

It is clear from the foregoing introduction of the case study settings, that the question of context is an imperative in the discussion of childhood education. This section of the chapter intends to now highlight the developing policy and its relationship with the contextual issues raised. An attempt will be made to relate policy, provision and practice to the relevant needs and cultural circumstances and peculiarities of northern Ghana.

In 2004, the government of Ghana under the New Patriotic Party leader John Agyekum Kufuor enacted an early childhood care and development (ECCD). To all intents and purposes, the policy defined its remit: 'the timely provision of a range of services that promote the survival, growth, development, and protection of the young child (0–8)' (Government of Ghana 2004). By its composite character, covering various facets of early childhood, Ghana's ECCD necessitated coordination from multiple sectors and stakeholders. To meet its objectives therefore, a national institutional framework sought a top-down regulatory framework through (National, Regional, District and Community) Coordinating Committees. This started with the then government Ministry in-charge of the policy (MOWAC); followed by the National ECCD Coordinating Committee (NECC) cascading down to the community level involving providers, parents, and children within ECCD services.

From the viewpoint of the policy document, the 2004 ECCD policy constituted a suitable replacement to previously uncoordinated and sector-biased programmes: for a policy provision that catered comprehensively for children and childhood in Ghana (GOG 2004). In effect, a holistic early childhood care and development programme. As far as costs were concerned, a model to share cost among parents, communities, district assemblies, NGOs,

private organisations, development partners and the government was contemplated. To stress the multi-stakeholder character of policy and allay fears over government disengagement from ECCD on funding; the government directed through policy that the Ministry of Finance compel other ministries, departments and agencies to make budgetary provision for ECCD. A significant aspect of the education reform was the eventual mainstreaming of ECCD (in this case ages 4–6) into Ghana’s Basic education system (covering ages 6–14 from Primary 1 through Junior High School). Contrary to the defined ages of 0–8 (as captured in ECCD), the reality of implementation has involved a two-year kindergarten (KG) for ages 4–6. Equally regarded highly in the policy was its equation to a poverty alleviation strategy: ‘Key to this is the efforts of Government to ensure improved standard of living and enhanced quality of life for families in Ghana’ through a National Programme of Action (NPA 1993–2003) (GOG 2004). Finally, the 2004 ECCD policy set specific targets in consideration of global benchmarks and timelines. Some instances included: provision of KG services to cover 60 percent of public primary schools by 2015; increase gross enrolments ratio (GER) at preschool level to 75 percent by 2015; expand provision to cover rural and deprived parts of the country by 2020 (GOG 2004). All these ambitious targets, on evaluation, paid little regard to local capacity and circumstances. Hence provision is still concentrated in urban centres, with a few exceptions of substandard private day-care centres in some rural locations.

A cursory evaluation of the 2004 ECCD policy in Ghana, while showing potential and promise raises certain arguments. The appearance of the 2004 policy suggests a locally enacted policy; on critical examination however, the policy embedded a plethora of global influences gleaned from its journey. It has been argued that international advances, along with continual nudging by UNICEF and UNESCO drove Ghana to its policy destination (Twum-Danso & Ame 2012). Inherently too, the letter and spirit of policy harboured inconsistent elements to

its own socio-cultural realities: for example, the layering on of educational reforms, as opposed to addressing falling primary enrolments. In addition to this latter point, acceptance of the human capital arguments to rationalise the provision of ECCD; along with the poverty mitigating properties of global ECCD further complicate the external influences on the enactment of the policy. The foundational studies (as evident in Chapter Two) that have spawned the views of ECCD as an investment with tangible future dividends are critically examined. It remains to be seen whether the need for an ECCD practice is the sort that this policy sought to establish. There is a sense, however, judging from the histories, that the aim was not to re-introduce 'colonial-style' institutions: especially of those attitudes suggestive of supplanting local tradition and culture and certain perceived superior notions of modernity and reified precepts. These dilemmas reflect the possible disjunctions between the phenomenon of global ECCD and local practice. Several instances were apparent in the case studies in the Northern Region of Ghana. In sum, an examination of the policy revealed a trend to find new reasons for reform as opposed to a perceived need based on the existing lived realities in Ghana.

4.6 ECCD Global–Local Dynamics: Issues of Congruence and Disjunction

Early childhood care and development (ECCD) in all essentials show a global character. Conceptions of childhood have mostly exemplified features of Western societies: with the assumption that good practice from the North is regarded as 'a sound principle for export everywhere in the world' (Penn 2009: 56). This has been further aided by the privileged pioneering role played by the West in universal public education. By this, the West becomes the measure of most educational practice, including early childhood education. Early childhood thus continues to be an area of contention; especially in relation to the adoption

of models that serve the needs of local settings. In the end, the resultant practices adopted are deemed imitations of what exists elsewhere, with widespread perceptions of enforced agendas and influences resulting in mimicked knowledge models.

Hence, the intersection of the global with the local remains an area of contention. Some researchers regard the issues as misplaced, with a viewpoint that universal schooling has a global appeal in the same ways that ECCD has become a widely accepted global practice. Further, what is deemed global practice is a convergence resulting from fusion and hybridisation of knowledges that coalesce into a ‘whole’; hence defying classificatory positioning as either global or local. This argument extends to the view that the local merely reflects the local, in part due to the reality that the local is within the global, naturally assuming its form. Be that as it may, there are elements of congruence as there are points of disjunction due to variations of contexts and cultures.

4.6.1 Elements of Disjuncture

The aim of the cases studied was to catch glimpses of the global in the local. GECE and NECE Schools offered that possibility to observe the realities. In pursuit of seeking answers to the research questions of this study, the abiding emphasis on context highlighted issues of disjuncture and congruence. ECCD as practiced in the northern region of Ghana, as observed from the two case studies, showed significant disarticulations in both theoretical and material terms. Theoretically, ECCD conceptually has been founded predominantly on Western cultures. The problematised ‘global child’ – a particularised caricature of children and childhoods is meaningful within Western contexts. The idea of an individual child imbued with agency and identifiable central location – such as within a school, when transposed into

contexts such as northern Ghana ill-aligns to such contexts. The oft instantiated Piagetian staged theories of child development as a basis for developmental theorists faces immense difficulties in gregarious learning cultures such as northern Ghana. In these contexts, learning and knowledge emerge out of the social: the child and childhood desired is one of raising a whole being. The competencies required for such reside in a labyrinth of complex social and cultural terrains that define the essence of living for cultures in the north of Ghana. Therefore, daily encounters and attendance to school is deemed insufficient in the nurturing of a child. Barnhardt and Kawagley (2008) define the requisite skills for such indigenous cultures in terms of a competent praxis: learned information and materials only materialise and matter if applicable to the lived realities of the society. Nsamenang (2008) highlights the deemphasised place of the Western regard for compartmentalised knowledge programmes – English, Mathematics, Science and other subjects as the ports via which knowledge and learning is sought and delivered. In high regard, are the pragmatic and material essences that make community lives bearable and fulfilling.

4.6.2 Elements of Congruence

To the extent that public schooling has become part and parcel of modern living, global practices such as ECCD hold influence and global potentiality. Ghana, and the Northern Region for that matter, as an outpost of the global is not immune from such global influences. In particular, the requirements for modern livelihood insist on a particular way to account for children and childhood. Such demands compel societies, even indigenous ones, to seek globally familiar and acceptable means. The isomorphisms highlighted in Andersen-Levitt's global schooling local meaning offer an apt summation of such tendencies. Regardless of context and culture, all children by their physiological culture follow a trajectory of

progression. Notwithstanding the developmentalist overtones implied here, this growth trajectory demands certain attitudes that are characteristic and peculiar. Schooling has emerged as the terrain for such periodic and episodic encounters among children.

In pointing out the divergence with Ghanaian cultures, the attempt was to highlight the implausibility of a universalised praxis. Still in Northern Ghana, in both settings studied, there are hosts of children not accounted for from the central locus that schools offer. Equally, the content of learning programmes show incongruity with patterns of living and livelihoods. The predominantly Muslim and farming communities of the North of Ghana have always shown a certain attitude to enforced structured schooling. This is perceived as disruptive and a distortion to their lived realities. For majority of the Muslims, Arabic/Quranic schooling (makaranta/madrasa) should trump all other realms of learning. Similarly, communities hold in high regard their affinities to the land: the only way they can pass these traditions to successive generations is scuttled by daily requirements for children to be sited within schools rather than farms and in other domestic nurturing terrains. In Ghana, schools have not assumed the status of the rewards – through the benefits systems for example – of some Western cultures. The opportunity cost of schooling is viewed in the very immediate limitations that the household suffers. The perception of deferred gratification is deemed a luxury that such indigenous societies cannot afford relative to their Western counterparts.

In sum, this chapter highlights the critical point of context and its relevance to early childhood education; especially in developing world countries such as Ghana. Significantly, the chapter offers more clarity on the global–local dynamics on ECCD. The explications offered cover the points of congruence as well as the disjunctions that emanate in the wake of the practice of a global phenomenon in a local context. The peculiar circumstances of a northern

Ghanaian child set within a context of a privileged Western conception and provisioned ECCD point to a contented terrain. All these issues relate, critically, to the contextual relevance of the emergent ECCD policy and practice, as highlighted in the two case study settings of northern Ghana.

Having defined the landscape within which this doctoral research was set, the next chapter will now dwell on the Case Study itself. Chapter Five covers the two cases studied in Ghana, as hinted briefly in this chapter. It therefore carries the weight of the detailed analysis and empirical data rather than chapter four which mainly defined the Ghana, and northern, context for that matter.

Chapter Five

5.0 Case Studies

This chapter follows up on the methodology chapter (Chapter Four) to offer an in-depth and analytical description of the two case studies – Gukpegu Early Childhood Experimental School and Naaya Early Childhood Experimental School. These are treated as intrinsic individual cases, as Case Study One and Case Study Two with each case analysed holistically along the following scope: 1) background description of the case; 2) the case in context; 3) tools for data generation and the emergent themes; and finally, 4) the major findings from each case. These are synthesised in a cross-case analyses in Chapter Six, following this chapter. The conduct of this multiple case study design as intrinsic cases assisted in unearthing the individual merits of each case.

5.1 Part I: Case Study One – Gukpegu Early Childhood Experimental School

5.1.0 Background

Gukpegu Early Childhood Experimental School (henceforth GECE School) is a private educational institution located within a relatively well-off (by local standards) suburb of Tamale, in the Northern Region of Ghana. It was established in 1993, by an educationist and public advocate for women's rights and the girl child. The school defines its mission as follows: the school sees its role as providing high quality education; as a haven for children; as a lifeline to the under-privileged children; and providing employment opportunities for the young, to complement the government's efforts in education. In a school profile document, GECE School rates itself as a successful education provider; starting with just about 20 pupils and now with a current population of nearly 1500 children. Within the school it continues to support children who become orphaned while in school – a current

total of 43 children continue attendance without the burden of paying fees. An apprenticeship scheme for youngster through work placement to offer skills training for needy young people. Most important of all, the core provision through daily operational facility for effective preschool and basic education.

In terms of its location, GECE School is sited off the busy Government departments' enclave: the Police Headquarters, the Courts, the Tamale Central Hospital, residential estate for public sector workers, as well as some shops (and small stalls) along the way. As enrolment is not based on residence within the catchment: children come from all parts of the Tamale Metropolis and beyond. As one of the pioneer ECCD providers – coalesced locally into 'G8 Schools' – its structure and fees (though typical among its peers), appear to cater for an affluent few compared to other providers, within the metropolis.

In terms of its locus, policy and regulation, the school is private but registered with government authorities: The Registrar General's Department in Accra (the Capital City of Ghana), the Ghana Education Service (GES), and as a requirement for preschool provision – registered with the Department of Social Welfare. GECE School has provision covering enrolment from crèche through Primary six; and a recently added provision for progression to Junior High School (KG through JHS 3 commonly called basic school), on the same site. Preschool provision caters from birth to age 5/6 at Kindergarten (KG): running two streams – Nursery 1 A&B; Nursery 2 A&B; KG 1 A&B; KG2 A&B – with class sizes of two teaching staff to forty children (2:40). The dual stream narrows to a single stream from the start of Primary 1 (at age 6); a situation the school has indicated it is trying to address due to the pressure on placement at the commencement of basic compulsory education. In its routine educational practice, the school applies a curriculum for all stages from the Ghana Education Service (GES). This is in fulfilment of its registered status as a basic education provider (KG to JHS 3). The curriculum guidelines are partly customised at the preschool level following guidance from the GES.

Following a daily routine (Monday to Friday), the preschool children get dropped off at the centre from 7.00 am and expected pick up commences usually at 2.00 pm

and latest by 5.00 pm. Compulsory basic school (P1 to JHS 3) starts from 8.00 am and closes at 3.00 pm. The day will normally begin with an Assembly (separate for Preschool except on Friday mornings) of teaching staff and school children within the courtyard of the basic school. Timetables vary in flexibility between preschool and basic school: but generally calibrated as six blocks of 45 minutes to an hour. To conform to GES standardised subject classification, the school teaches according to syllabus or curriculum prescribed by government agency – Ghana Education Service. These are often tweaked to assist teaching at preschool levels: however, evidence from the case study points to an apparent attempt to push down primary school content to preschool. Among others, this is due to the pervasive understandings that preschool children ought to be primary school ready, on entry at Basic 1. Another reason is the attempt to whittle down numbers for placement in primary; via competitive assessments demanding higher level skills from children. Table 5.1 below reflects the trend to calibrate preschool subjects to increasingly reflect what awaits at primary school.

Preschool Time Table Subjects	Basic School (Focus on P1 and P2)
Language Numbers Environmental Studies Story Time Science Creative Art French ICT Dagbani	English Mathematics Science Citizenship Education French Dagbani Computer Creative Art Physical Education Pre-Technical Skills Religious and Moral Education
Ghana Education Service Curriculum	GES Curriculum
Psycho-social skills (self-confidence and assertiveness) Language and Literacy Mathematics Environmental Studies Creative Activities Nutrition and Safety Health	English Language Mathematics Integrated Science Religious and Moral Education Information and Communication Technology Social Studies French A Ghanaian Language (offered locally) Basic Design and Technology

Table 5.1: Subjects for Preschool and Basic School (Primary & JHS)

As its overarching vision GECE School sees itself as ‘A Model School of Excellence that develops talents of the human person for the growth of the region, the country and beyond’ (n.d. School Profile Document). With long periods of immersion within the case school (approximately two months), the case study unravelled within these arenas; *staff, children, the school building* and environment, the *learning* and *educational experiences*, and the *relationships*. These are descriptively analysed to achieve depth and contextual understandings of the case school.

5.1.1 The School

GECE School is located within a residential area with lots of woodland surroundings, which is quickly being eroded for buildings. The school was founded as a preschool in 1993 and now has within its structures a junior high school (JHS); thus providing a full range of the required basic education. Structurally, the preschool stands away from the beginnings of basic school – built as a two-storeyed horse-shoe shaped new block. Between the two schools – the preschool and basic school – is a small fenced area landscaped with flowers and green grass. The remainder of the grounds, including the recreation area (with a climbing pole, swing, and a metal merry-go-round) on the back of the preschool block, are ordinary sandy grounds. The dual stream run in preschool has just about enough accommodation for the children: in the corridors are some of the play materials – a plastic playhouse broken in many places, decorations and clutter from children’s learning activities; as well as learning walls with words and alphabets, among others.

Within the classrooms are similar seatwork designs, of groups and separate desks and chairs all facing the board – the direction of the teacher: whose corner or central desk in some cases is authoritatively positioned. Commonly, there is a lot of clutter of resource materials for learning and teaching, children’s work, books and seemingly dated decorations. These create a busy almost sensory overload feel in the class ambience. As a school with provision for ECCD, an achievement of goals of ‘holistic development of the child’ and a better skilled workforce, it offer a certain rationale and a clarity evident in both the physical structural reality of GECE School as well as in its mutual intelligible relational connections to non-

school factors – such as home and community influences. Halpern (2013: 19) has hinted at the importance of such non-school issues: they ‘powerfully shape children’s availability to learn’. Within the school setting there are a plenitude of factors that interactively render the educational relevance of the school. These entail experiences both external and internal: yet school still claim leverage over children’s experiences. While the child meets school with significant non-school influences (family, home, peers, and community); these externalities merely suffer and are overrun by the mundane and routinized activities of school (teaching and learning, recreation, sports among other activities). This is by no means a signal of cooperative relationship: on the contrary ‘schools, more than other providers, have a history of ignoring, or at least minimising the meaning of, the cultural and linguistic diversity of the communities they serve, which translate into ignoring or minimising the particular knowledge that children from those communities bring to school’ (Halpern 2013: 23). As a progressive policy aim, the 2004 ECCD Policy (GoG 2004) aims to integrate early childhood education into the basic education system (Garcia et al. 2008). It is not surprising therefore, that at the bottom-end of public (government run) schools, new classroom arrangements have mushroomed into existence. In the attempt to fulfil the dictates of the new policy, such ‘*after-thought*’ schools – as they are referred to in this research, rather than ‘*growth*’ (as is the case with GECE School), reflect the gimmickry in the public provision of ECCD in Ghana. This builds up to the conception of ECCD as a new phenomenon requiring such novel adjustments structurally and institutionally. In a recent assessment of ECCD provision, the Ghana Education Service commented that (UNESCO 2006: 4):

Although there has been a rapid expansion in ECD and pre-school services, the quality of many ECD centres (both public and private) leaves much to be desired and only a relatively low proportion of children benefit from their services. While some centres, especially in the rural areas are held under trees and in old dilapidated rooms, others are poorly ventilated with bad lighting and little or no room for play.

The foregoing is further confirmation that, by its character and resources, GECE School is not an average school by local standards. At the heart of this case study, is the assumption and the empirical reality that ECCD are tied to schooling. In the conduct of this research, little evidence was presented in terms of alternatives to (school-based) ECCD. Such positioning gives rise to two related cultural issues. To apply Halpern's (2013: 23–24) explication: firstly, the 'institutional marriage' between ECCD and school risks 'losing the present to the future'; and secondly, there is prevalent misperception of ECCD as a child development programme with children increasingly seen as the 'raw human capital to be carefully developed through schooling to meet the demands of a globalised labor force'. An appraisal of the GECE school provision and practice evidenced both trends: ECCD is closely tied to schools and schooling, as well as the civic and commercial aspirations resonant with human capital theories. Quite clearly, ECCD as practiced in GECE School when placed in its local demographic setting produces disconnects resulting from the local 'imitation' of a global 'ideal'.

5.1.2 Staff

GECE School functioned on the complement of nearly 49 members of staff. These are the staff with daily presence and encounters with the school. For the teaching staff: the preschool has staff–child ratio of 2:40, in all 18 members of staff from crèche through KG2. The remaining staff worked at the basic school (P1 to JHS3): with relatively higher staff–child ratios of 1: 60, in some cases. Staff recruitment reflected operational needs as opposed to adherence to higher levels of qualification (in particular teacher certification). The majority of preschool teachers are high school certificate holders (West African Senior School Certificate Examination - WASSCE); and at the basic school, qualified teachers were equally rare.

In keeping with its community ethos, the school sees part of its role in the mitigation of the unemployment in the township. Thus, the dominance of young school leavers, among the staff, is conveniently explained to negate the critique of an inexperienced and scantily qualified workforce. However, in relation to whether this calibre of workforce delivered to satisfy their part of the bargain, the

management of the school appeared positive. With an emphasis on ages 3–8, staff relevance could only be judged within the relational contexts with children; and the benefits (such as learning experiences) gained from attendance. Worthy of emphasis in this respect are: staff–child ratios; classroom interactions; spatial structures – classes and playgrounds; resources for learning opportunities; and school–home relations.

A uniquely placed staff of a different category is the Proprietor of the school. Although embedded within the running of the school, other responsibilities outside the school dominated her schedule. As a visionary leader, funder and founder of the school, the female proprietor exuded a high level of confidence, authority within the school. In fact, GECE School depended tremendously on her experience. She appeared well-travelled and always engineered innovative practices, mostly from Europe and the United States. Staff related instances of curricular modifications based on inspiration from international conferences attended by the Proprietor.

5.1.3 Educational and Learning Experiences

The GECE school case took cognisance of the learning experiences that children and staff generated. Many understandings have resulted from the empirical realities revealed through observations and the perspectives of the owners of those experiences – the stakeholders. Provision for early childhood education is defined and understood largely as preschool. Therefore, the extensions to early primary (age 8) appeared to most practitioners as new knowledge. Perceptions of a range of stakeholders, among them children, conveyed a sense that ECCD provision, by its mere presence offered some benefits. Children (during interviews) mostly described their experiences in terms of futuristic outcomes: ‘to become a doctor’; ‘work hard so I can become somebody’ and ‘so my father can give me a birthday party, when I am good in class’; rarely as ‘I am happy that mum sent me here today; my big sister was biting me’ or even that ‘the French teacher said I can say the words like I am a French person from Togo’. These experiences, understood within

their contexts, show a meaningfully rich interpretation by children of the objective of schooling and education.

Equally interesting is the way these experiences, contrasting with parental and school expectations, reveal differences. For instance, in this case school, while parents indicated (during a group interview) they regarded it a secure and professional environment offering to children what they would otherwise not gain from home, teaching staff on the other hand, consistently deferred to a teaching and learning motive to define their practice. Teaching staff saw their role more in terms of delivering learning experiences and opportunities, to complement what home offered, only at a professionally organised level. Such differences are not uncommon; in the varied ways parents and teaching staff perceive their roles in relation to children (Calder 2001; Hanon & James 1990; Raban 2001; Van Moorst & Graham 1995). These bring into question the purpose of early childhood education, especially in the increasing eagerness to locate them more and more closely to schools, and within schools. In many ways though, learning experiences – and to an extent opportunity – were embedded within staff-children relationships. As a central element to this relationship, the teacher is perceived as providing rich interactions within the classroom contexts (Halpern 2013; Hamre & Pianta 2007). The relational emphasis is key to making sense of ECCD, in the context of GECE School. This is because with such emphatic learning-based intentions of the school, it is crucial that these experiences and opportunities are best grounded in ‘the context of meaningful learning’ activities and programmes (Halpern 2013: 18). In themselves, such meanings are culturally rooted within communities and the selves that children bring to school and learning (Nsamenang & Tchombe 2011; Halpern 2013).

In other words, children come to school with previous knowledge that has been learned in their home environment, which may differ depending on what was available to be learned, and what was considered to be important. This knowledge is not necessarily the one that is valued in the school setting, and so it often gets ignored or is even despised.

(Nsamenang & Tchombe 2011: 167)

Considering the character of the school and the learning experiences promoted, GECE's disposition to a standardised template breeds the conformity that result in the disarticulations between global ECCD and its practice.

5.1.4 Relationships and Interconnections with the Global

James Ferguson (2011: 198) in his discussion of such methodological novelties as multi-sited ethnography, reconceptualises relations, not objects, as the primary focus: 'to understand ethnographic facts, we must learn to place them in a field of relations'. Because of the foregoing explanations of structural design of GECE School, the staff, and learning experiences (as local facts); these are only intelligible when contextualised, relationally. These local facts (when perceived relationally) are animated, not in mutually exclusive ways but via symbiotic connections, reconnections, and interconnections.

Barad (2010) has asserted that 'existence is not an individual affair'. To this end, understanding the rationale for policy provision and practice of ECCD in Northern Ghana required 'an adequate anthropological account' of the relationships – social, political, cultural, historical, transnational and global – to make the phenomenon 'acutely meaningful' (Ferguson 2011: 199). In particular, such transnational tracings (relevant to this context), far from abdication of local context, constitute heightened relational understandings. To an extent GECE School is perceived as taking its position 'within an encompassing set of relations' (ibid). The expectation resultantly is that the effective relationships hold some benefits for local attempts to follow global trends; even if the argued disarticulations are the component parts of such praxis.

In this case study, there is no evading the binaries: global/local; rich/poor; general/particular; developed/developing worlds, and inward/outward (as in this study). In a sense, while a contextualised particularity in a local setting, the range of meanings are uniquely context-based. Therefore, investigating ECCD practice is

heavily reliant on an expansive global reach, a ‘new sort of anthropology of the global’ (ibid: 202). There are common relational interconnections in ECCD practice, namely: the role of preschool to prepare and deliver on readiness; for ECCD to address achievement gaps; for ECCD to play an affirmative and compensatory role; mitigate poverty; resolve worries of a future workforce; and provide solutions to other inequalities in society. These interrelationships are not unproblematic: Halpern (2013: 24) asserts that ‘there is a clear risk in extending the line that already connects schooling to global competitiveness down into early childhood, asking ECE to address not only the achievement gap but the global achievement gap as well’. Crucially, for these rationales to succeed, local contexts such as Ghana, need to reflect on the ways they wish to account for children and childhood. This question, ultimately, ought to be the defining element of what child rearing and upbringing practices are appropriate, locally. It is therefore, not out of place to question the commonplace assumptions inherent in simply mimicking educational practices – such as ECCD – wholly applied in local contexts such as Tamale, in Northern Ghana.

5.1.5 Tamale Metropolis (within the Northern Region)

Tamale Metropolis is located within the capital town (Tamale) of the Northern Region. The Region which is one of the ten administrative regions in Ghana is deemed one of the poorest in Ghana. According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, the population of the metropolis is 233,252 representing 9.4 percent of the region’s entire population. Demographically, within the metropolis, there is a near parity between male and female among the population: with a high proportion of the population living in urban localities (80.8 percent) as compared to rural localities (19.1 percent) of the metropolis. Children constitute the majority of the household composition (40.4 percent): meaning a hugely youthful population (almost 36.4 percent of the population is below 15 years) with a small number of elderly persons (60 years and older representing 5.1 percent). The total age dependency ratio for the district is 69.4, the age dependency ratio for rural localities is higher (86.5) than that of urban localities (65.7). The 2010 Ghana Housing and Population Census classified rural and urban townships based on the

size of the population. As a locality with more than 5,000 persons, therefore, Tamale was classified as urban (GSS 2010: 13). Geographically, the Metropolis is located within the Savannah woodland zone: with characteristically limited short and scattered wood lots. The main vegetation is grassland, interspersed with guinea savannah woodland, characterised by drought-resistant trees such as acacia, (*Acacia longifolia*), mango (*Mangifera*), baobab (*Adansonia digitata* Linn), shea nut (*Vitellaria paradoxa*), dawadawa, and neem (*Azadirachta indica*). The most significant, economically, and now widely recognised, is the 'Shea Tree' – which produces shea-butter. Over the years the shea industry has engaged lots of households, locally, in the picking, processing and marketing of the product.

Administratively, the Metropolis is run by an Assembly of 59 Members, reflecting a devolved local government structure. This is done with the complement of a traditional authority of eminent chiefs with a lineal hierarchy – the Yaa Naa being the paramount or overlord of the entire 'Dagbon Traditional Area'. The traditional ruler for the Metropolis – the Gukpegu Naa – is enskinned (enthroned) by the Yaa Naa, in consonance with this hierarchy. Socially, the Dagombas are the majority ethnic group with other ethnic groups such as Gonjas, Mamprusis, Akan, Dagaabas, ethnic groups from the Upper East Region (of Ghana), and other nationals from other African countries and across the globe. Gradually, with increasing modernisation, Tamale is fast assuming a cosmopolitan character; thus watering down on the premium placed on traditional authority.

Of the 115 communities in the Metropolis, most of them lack basic social and economic infrastructure such as good road networks, school blocks, hospitals, markets and recreational centres. Typical of the region, most of the rural communities have a large expanse of land for agricultural activities and, with good rains (on which the farming largely depends) usually produce enough food for the Metropolis. Overall, 56.7 percent of households within the metropolis are engaged in some form of farming; mainly crops (such as yam, maize, millet, guinea corn, rice, groundnuts, beans, soya beans and cowpea) and rearing of livestock such as goats, sheep and cattle. During the rainy season (between April and October) residents experience high humidity, slight sunshine with heavy thunder storms,

compared to the dry season which is characterized by dry Harmattan winds from November-February and high sunshine from March-May. Wholesale and retail is the largest industrial sector employing about 33.4 percent of the economically active population and this is followed by agriculture and forestry activities. In terms of culture, the area has deep rooted cultural practices reflected in activities such as annual festivals, naming and marriage ceremonies. Most of the festivals commemorate historical accounts that still have some relevance to the lives of the people (mostly Dagombas). Major festivals include Damba, Bugum (fire festival) and the two Muslim Eid festivals (Eid-ul Fitr and Eid-ul Adha). The Metropolis is dominated by Muslims (90.5 percent) and followed by Christians (8.8 percent), with some spiritualists and African traditionalists.

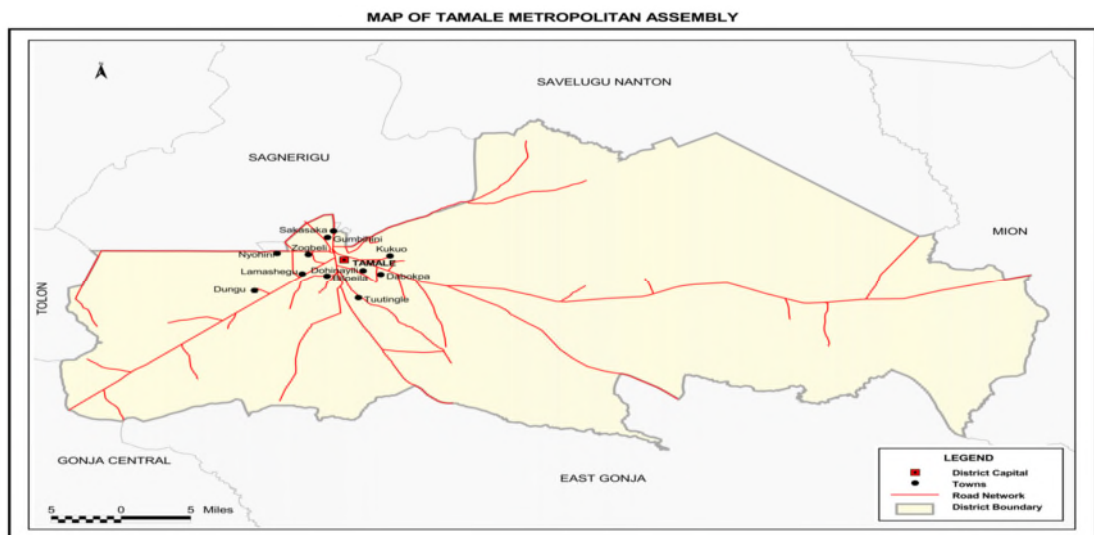


Figure 5.1 Map of Tamale Metropolis adapted from the 2010 GHPC (GNSS 2010)

5.2.1 The Case in Context

This is a case study of early childhood education and development (ECCD) – a global phenomenon – in the practical context of a local provision (GECE School). This is a case study of GECE School. The key objective of the study is to gauge the disjunctions apparent in a globally-conceived phenomenon (ECCD) when practised in a local context such as Ghana, a country in the developing world.

According to a recent census of population and housing in Ghana (Ghana Statistical Service 2010: 16):

Although the lower age limit of formal education is six years for primary one, eligibility for the school attendance question was lowered to three years because pre-school education has become an important phenomenon in the country.

In the Tamale Metropolitan area, among those currently attending school (84,897 pupils), 15.1 percent are in nursery, 18.2 percent in Junior High School (JHS), 12.5 percent in Senior High School (SHS) and the largest proportion (40 percent) are in primary. There are more males than females enrolled in almost all the levels of education. Within a methodological framework of interpretivism, the researcher embarked on a case study: using GECE School as a vantage point to experience and interpret the naturalistic occurrences and experiences of the contemporary phenomenon (ECCD). Hammersley and Atkinson (1995: 7) perceptively claim that 'human actions are based upon or infused by social meanings: that is by intentions, motives, beliefs, rules, and values'. As a consequence of this view, the case study as rendered within GECE School was set within this humanistic tradition and social reality. In practical terms, this involved encounters with a range of stakeholders (children, parents, staff, teachers, management, and other key stakeholders such as policy makers). This case study, hence, constitute a narrative of the lived realities and interpretations of the perspectival meanings locally appropriated; to explicate global phenomenon such as ECCD.

The contextual background of Tamale exposes a potential for conflict; in the encounter with global practices such as ECCD. In making judgements about the interpretations given by stakeholders, therefore, some affordances are key to allowing a culturally appropriate understanding of these perceptions. The terrains of the cultural context vis-à-vis the global trends both manifest and embed some of the purported disjunctions. Somehow explanations of stakeholders while not expressly indicative of such disjunctions, observed realities and perceptions reveal that they harboured and inhabited, imperceptibly, those disruptions.

5.1.7 Data and Analysis

In this case study, analyses are followed thematically, essentially grouped under the tools via which those evidences emerged. Overall, a sample of 23 participants, covering stakeholders within the setting: 3 parents, 10 children across Preschool to P2 (Basic 2), 9 teaching staff and 1 Manager/HT. In terms of the layout of this analysis section, I intend to draw on the data from *interviews*, *observations*, and *focus groups* following each of the five themes. For depth of analysis – as applied to data generation – each theme benefits from multiple sources sought among the relevant stakeholders engaged. Although their perspectives have been reduced thematically, it remains the case that the perceptions of stakeholders sampled via the RQs–methodology–methods iteration remain contextually grounded.

1. *Early childhood Care and Development as a Global Phenomenon*
2. *Developed World – Developing World Epistemic Interactions*
3. *Status Connotations in Childhood Geographical Positioning and Understandings*
4. *Indigenous Conceptions of knowledge, childhood, and the world*
5. *Mis/Understandings of the role of education: Localised meanings of a global phenomenon*

5.1.7.1 Theme 1 – *Early childhood Care and Development as a Global Phenomenon*

Early childhood care and development (ECCD) was the term adopted, in most of the references to early childhood education, based on its common use in the Ghanaian context. Specifically, it is the term used in current policy document (ECCD Government of Ghana Policy 2004). In the case study of GECE School, ECCD was mostly conceptualised in educational terms: a learning programme,

preschool, pre-primary, not normal (but preparation for) school, and as foundation stage, among others. In a few instances, some practitioners described ECCD as a change of environment for the growing child; to socialise with peers, and as a safe place away from home. These range of views underscore a perceptively positive impression among stakeholders on the role that ECCD plays; with only a few negative undertones to its practice within the case school.

In the first instance, the suggestion that ECCD is a global phenomenon (theme 1) resulted from myriad cycles of reductive processes. From several coding processes and iteration with the RQs and theoretical literature; the eventual thematic reductions coalesced into an overarching theme. This theme resonates with the entirety of the RQs (1 to 6): hence the data that assisted in answering the various RQs have naturally found home in Theme 1.

Interviews

The format of interviewing was mostly semi-structured: although variations were applied such as the in-depth interviews of the key stakeholders and the flexible structure applied to child interviews. In the preparation of the case study protocol, designing of interview schedules took a lot of attention and detail: unsurprisingly, this yielded immense rich data that were analysed thematically. Within GECE School, all participants were interviewed in English language: parents, teaching staff and children (preschool age 3 to age 8 at P2), the head teacher (HT- designated as Manager), and the Proprietor – interviewed as a key informant. These interviews were conducted following interview schedules (See Appendix), varied accordingly: Children Interviews; Parents' Interviews; Stakeholder Interviews. In GECE School a total of 9 interview encounters took place across these stakeholder groups: 3 children group interviews (10 children overall), 1 parent group interview (of 3 parents), 3 post-classroom observation interviews (3 individual staff), and 2 senior staff interviews. Interviews aimed the perspectives of stakeholders toward global ECCD practice purportedly functioning incongruously in the local context of GECE School.

Consequently, these perceptions thematically summarised into: Theme 1 *Early childhood Care and Development as a Global Phenomenon* (RQ1 to RQ6); Theme 2 *Developed World – Developing World Epistemic Interactions* (RQ 1 RQ2, and RQ3); Theme 3 *Status Connotations in Childhood Geographical Positioning and Understandings* (RQ2, RQ3, RQ5, and RQ6); Theme 4 *Indigenous Conceptions of knowledge, childhood, and the world* (RQ2, RQ4, RQ5, and RQ6); Theme 5 *Mis/Understandings of the role of education: Localised meanings of a global phenomenon* (RQ4, RQ5, and RQ6). These themes broadly reflect the original research questions that led to this case study, in the first instance. Interview Data which resulted in the constructions of these themes reflected the views of the stakeholders; as thematically categorised. The question (RQ 1) of the implication of the developed world in the future schooling trajectories of developing world children (garnered data); reductively led to *ECCD as a Global Phenomenon*. Stakeholder responses highlighted colonialism, globalism and globalisation, poverty and anti-poor strategies, new trends in conceiving childhood, and increasing urbanisation (understood as modernity) among others.

ECCD is good because it keeps the kids in a professional environment. It also exposes them to more of the social world rather than just the nuclear family with just the parents. Can you imagine if the children just came to start at Basic 1, there will be so many problems; ECCD curtails those issues. (KG1 Staff)

Oh, it is a total importation: Kinder (children) in Kindergarten along with the German word for Backyard or garden (garten) give us the meaning children's garden. It is all now part and parcel of our educational system. The Ministry of Education has embraced it and I think it is worth having it. Children learn more at young age, according to the research.so things like multiplication Times-Table, number drill and rhymes all help give the child a good foundation. (HT/SMT1)

Preschool lays a solid foundation for later schooling. All that is expected of the child is all imprinted on their minds; so they are used to the routine. This is the reason why the parents like our private school education: in public school, the supervision is very poor; but here you even have some incentive to enhance your performance. So many qualified people want to work here. We are able to tell that

there is a vast difference between those who attended and those that didn't attend preschool.
(Nursery 2 Staff)

Also, in triangulating the data interviews with key informants appeared more definitive on claims. The explanation stem clearly from their privileged position of being part of the engineering of local provision. Some agreement appeared in the ways they expressed their views on ECCD and the claim that it is foreign and mostly imported.

The curriculum is designed to suit all cultural groups; that is why they learn manners, festivals, seasons, environments, community, and identity. ECCD is foreign to our educational practice: the audio-visuals, teaching and learning materials are all foreign-based. We all watch movies, they are foreign just as the toys we use; they are not moulded to reflect our local cultural needs. (ECCD Coordinator)

It is foreign, I know. But it doesn't matter. Most parents locally are struggling to speak English to help these children do well in school. It doesn't matter. (Proprietor 1)

For children, understandings conveyed normality; in the sense that they perceived schooling as the stable constant that they do, anyway. During interviews, their conception of ECCD was very much about academic work.

Researcher: *Why are you here?*

Child 1: *I am here to learn...learn hard*

Researcher: *What do you learn?*

Child 2: *Numbers, additions, sound...yes! Dictation...*

Researcher: *Why do you learn these things?*

Child 2: *To pass the test...so my mum and dad will do me better... when I have birthdays.*

Staff corroborated these conceptions:

At KG children usually complain to us that they do not get enough time to play in class – like the rhymes, songs and games. All we do in class is teach and learn: we only play at the start of the lesson, and when we are about to finish we tell stories and get the moral of the story for the lesson.
(KG 1 Staff)

Observations

ECCD as practiced in GECE School showed a universal tendency to the foreign, from observations and by its material character, its conceptualisation and utility, and in its relational tendencies. Often, more of the global was perceived in the local garnered from the perceptions and attitudes of stakeholders. As a researcher, it could never be concluded from the globality of observations that ‘ECCD was made in Ghana’: diffuse as its origins were. The GECE School’s context in the Tamale Metropolis harboured, observationally, inherent contradictions: a local institution practicing a foreign and imported phenomenon (ECCD). The evidence for this is rich and reflected in the teaching and learning materials (books, seatwork, and ideas), learning programmes (curriculum), the theoretical underpinnings to learning programmes (references to Piaget, Montessori and Dewey), and the policy on ECCD itself (documentary evidence of foreign influences – in particular the World Bank and UNICEF). Some examples below:

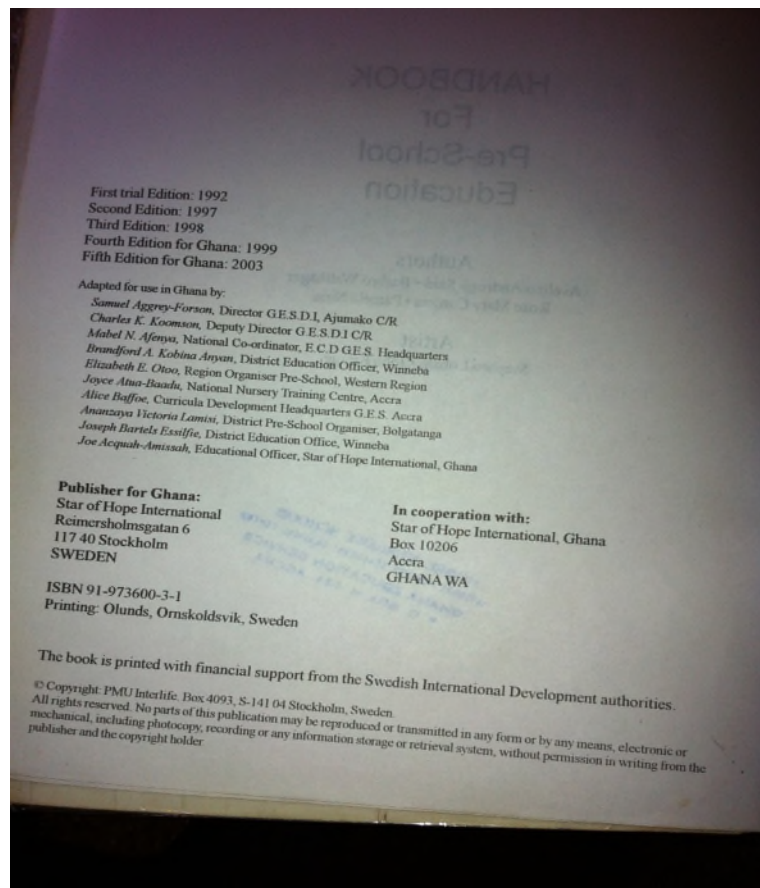


Figure 5.2 Exemplar Teaching and Learning Material (TLM)

PART 1	
Professional and administrative section	
The Pre-school Centre	6
Roles of Parents and Community	7
Roles of the Pre-School Teacher	8
Teacher's Role to Children	8
Teacher's Role to Parents and Community	9
Teacher's Role Towards Education Authorities	9
Administrative Role of the Pre-School Teacher	10
Pre-school Environment	13
Materials	14
Learning Materials	14
Storing and Display of Materials	17
Understanding the Child	17
Child Growth and Development	19
Children's Needs	19
Physical Needs	20
Emotional Needs	21
Social And Moral Needs	22
Spiritual Needs	22
Intellectual Needs	23
Stages of Child Development	23
The Pre-Natal Stage	2
The Infant Stage (Birth-1 Year)	3
Toddler Stage (1-3 Years)	3
The Pre-School Stage (3-6 Years)	3
Child Development, (3-4 Years)	3
Child Development (5 Years)	3
Child Development (6 Years)	3
Middle Childhood Stage (7-12 Years)	3
Adolescent Development Stage (13-18 Years)	3
How Children Learn	3
Reasons for learning (i.e. Motivation)	3
When do Children Learn?	3
How Children Learn	3
Methods for Teaching	3
Discipline	3

Figure 5.3 Staged Theory (Developmentalism) in Teaching Methods

Data obtained from classroom practice pointed to attempts by staff to follow little understood education theories: based on the structured curriculum and TLMs. Content of lessons and staff attitudes pointed to novel attitudes required (suggestive of a new era) in approach to ECCD practice, in particular. In post-observation interviews, preschool staff in particular, narrated the extra efforts that is not required with other stages beyond preschool. Curricular subjects appeared to conform to global standardised subjects: English, Mathematics, Science and other calibrations. By this character, except for the infrequent references to local examples, their functional use and propriety to the context were limited. This is no different to the global template suggested in the literature review (Chapter Three).

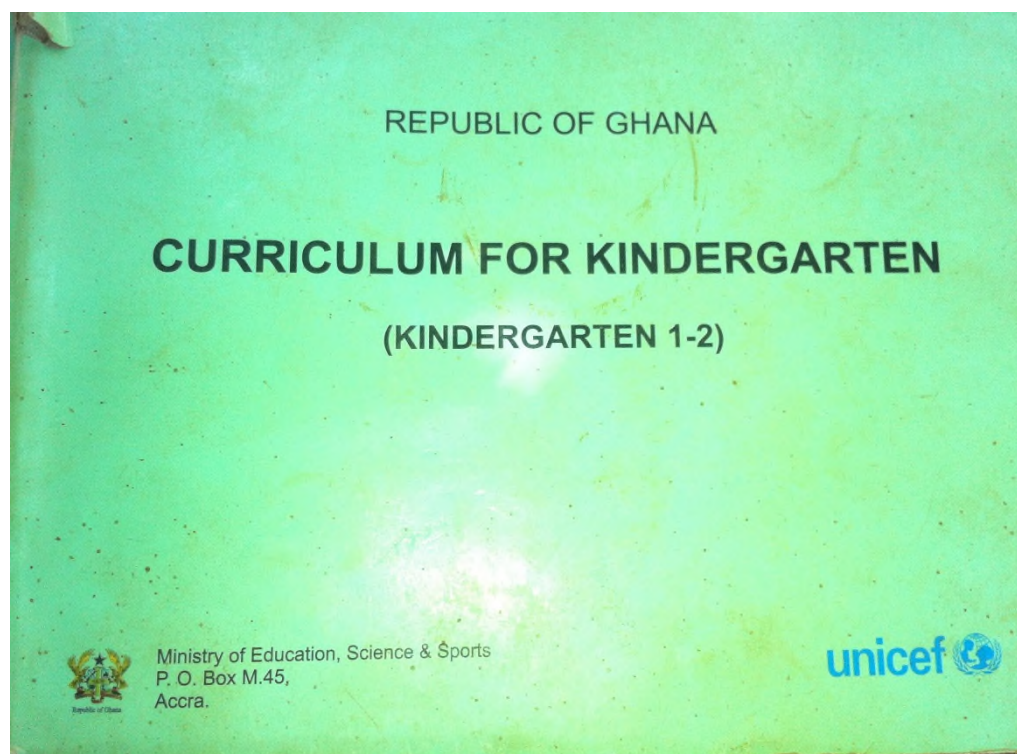


Figure 5.7 Preschool Curriculum in Ghana

KG2				
UNIT/TOPIC	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	CONTENT	TEACHER, LEARNER ACTIVITIES/ METHODOLOGIES	EVALUATION
NUMBER NAMES AND NUMERALS 11-20	<p>The child will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> count objects from 11-20. read the numerals (11 – 20). write numerals (11-20) 	<p>Counting objects up to 20.</p> <p>Reading numerals (11-20)</p> <p>Writing numerals (11-20).</p>	<p>Let children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> count objects from 11- 20 using groups of ten objects and single ones. describe the numerals 11-20 as a group of ten added to single objects. E.g 1 bundle and 1 stick = 11 (11=10+1) 1 bundle + 2 sticks = 12 (12= 10+2) etc. Read the numerals 11-20. Drill them using number cards and number charts. Write the numerals using the experience gained in writing 1-10. Assist those in difficulty. 	<p>Children to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Say number names from 1-20 (order) write out numerals orderly 1-20 Find the missing numerals: 11--12 -- 16.
UNIT 4 TIME	<p>tell the time some events occur in the day.</p> <p>identify events which take a short time and those which take a long time.</p>	<p>idea of time.</p> <p>Events which take long time and events that take long time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State time of the day (morning, afternoon or evening) some events occur. E.g the time we: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sleep go to school: Play etc. Determine whether the time taken by events e.g. water draining out of milk tin, taking a book from the office, taken breakfast, walking to the cupboard, etc. take a long time or a short time. Identify events which take longer time and events which take short time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> work in groups to find out events which take longer time and events which take short time.

Figure 5.8 Learning Programmes (Numbers, Names and Numerals)



Figure 5.9 Exemplars of Workbooks on Standardised Subjects at Preschool

From some of the teaching and learning materials within school settings, the following were clear. There is certainly an attempt to adhere to standardised subjects, as obtains globally. Further, there is from the data a perception of strong influences – at resource levels for example – from mostly developed parts of the world. In the end the inadequate referents of some local content within ECCD practice, tend to depict local practice in more global terms.

Focus Group

A Focus Group (FG) discussion was conducted once within the research process at GECE School: mainly with staff from preschool and Primary 1 and 2. In all, seven members participated in the FG discussion which proved immensely useful as is evident in the quality of understanding of the topics, the process and the emergent data. In respect of the FG, as only specific topics were covered, these interpretations will cover the following themes, distilled from the emergent data.

The FG discussion explored various subjects on ECCD: general understandings of early childhood, appropriate age of enrolment, foreign or local, role of culture in ECCD, purpose of ECCD, and role of research as well as learner attitudes. The staff appeared knowledgeable on early childhood education: with varied views on the age of enrolment – the majority accepting that age 3 was appropriate for school starts. On whether ECCD was foreign or local, participants expressed disagreements among each other: concluding that it was more foreign than local. Most cited the use of a ‘borrowed language’ (English Language) of instruction and writing. Similar contentions were encountered on whether local culture was reflected in ECCD policy, provision and practice: the major referent by the group – culture as local language and in the festivals – implied a scant presence of local socio-historical content in ECCD. As far as the purpose of ECCD, the divergent views ranged from none (or in vogue) to the typical working mothers’ rationale for enrolment. Participants underestimated the importance of research in education and indicated how localised researches could enhance practice. Here is an extract from a FG dialogue:

GECE 2: *The age of compulsory enrolment into school is not a problem: from the colonial era the age of six was when children went to school. I went to school when I was six years, but today children can attend school between 1 and 5 years. During my enrolment at six, physiological measures were taken (I remember I had to put my hand across to my ear). It worked and it has persisted because it has yielded results, from colonial times. If it had failed we would have stopped.*

GECE 1: *It is much local than foreign. Even though we use foreign materials As teachers we use our ideas which sometimes come from our culture and environmentour innermost talents....things that are ‘us’ what we have...brooms, tables, food. We ourselves are Ghanaian and only use English because of their future educational needs.*

GECE 5: *It is foreign alright but not all that are foreign.....through the early missionaries we learnt somethings....but they also learn from us but will not say it. On the language we sometimes use both: the L2 helps complement L1. We use Dagbani according to the curriculum of GES. Some schools like this we use Dagbani as a language which the children understand, rather than English all the time. The difficulty is in the many languages that we have in Ghana. If the British were not here, we will all be speaking our different languages*

GECE 1: *Considering all the learning and teaching materials, most of them the books the videos and toys are all foreign. In my village rather than Tamale, a common language like Gonja may be applied. The whole argument here is that there is foreign and there is local: but there is more foreign. Imagine trying to write an application letter in a Dagbani.*

5.1.7.2 Theme 2 – *Developed World–Developing World Epistemic Interactions*

Interviews

From experience of researching within GECE School, there was a heightened awareness and articulations of issues transcending national boundaries. The common binaries – developed world and developing world (more so than Majority/Minority world) – filled the perceptions of stakeholders. As far as the context of this research, references were often made to the difficult economic circumstances prevalent in the Northern Region. Stakeholders perceived the developed world as: offering best practice, right and relevant models, resource-rich contexts to impart to others, and high on the hierarchical pedestal on modernity (outward view).

It is only now that people have begun to associate some material gains to school attendance that people in the North encourage their children to go to school. Since colonial times, all that we could offer was our labour. (Proprietor 1)

All the research that have helped education to advance in policy and practice have all come from abroad. We just add a bit of our own cultures, which the whites don't have; even that is not much. So the things like our manners, greetings, prayer, respect and food; we have just added these to our practice. (Proprietor 1)

We are still following the footsteps of our colonial masters. We are mimicking the trend in ECCD; so even the knowledge and research are imported. It would be nice to have a bilingual provision for

example but we don't. Our schools will struggle to develop materials into the multiple languages, so it is easier to adopt a common language – so everyone uses English. Even this interview...is that not so? (ECCD Coordinator)

As evident above, local stakeholders portrayed their context within a developing world: as poorly resourced, benefiting from already existing models (e.g. ECCD); but also with close affinities to kith-and-kin, high regard for tradition and culture, and loose policy and regulatory structures. GECE School for example, viewed itself as interconnected to the outside world of school – both within the nation as well as transnationally. The humanistic relationships among staff, the school, children, and home foreshadowed some contradictions: reminiscent of something local; yet in practice reflective of more global tendencies.

In terms of communication and the use of language, English (L2 Second language) is mostly the language of instruction, in schools. This is in spite of the GES directive for instruction in mother-tongue (L1 First language) up to early primary stage. Staff hinted at various reasons for the inability of the school to respect the government policy. Among others, they cited linguistic diversity, arising out of the many ethnic groups that resided in the local community – a teaching staff put the number at twelve - the tribes represented in the school and local community. Teacher training was not reflecting reality in schools and teachers were not fluent and skilled in all the local dialects represented in their classes. School-home contradictions presented a problem where parents showed a tendency to speak English to their children at home, thus rendering the intent of the policy futile. Moreover, both staff and parents expressed anxiety about a futuristic outlook to a predominantly English-speaking local and global community. Commonly, the use of the English Language is already pervasive whether one opted for employment, further education, or other professional pursuits.

Yes, ECCD is foreign; and so is the English language. It doesn't matter. Concentrating on the local language takes us only so far: our knowledge and languages don't go beyond Accra. However, although we are limited, our products will leave and go beyond the boundaries. (Proprietor 1)

We have to embrace both the local and the foreign: we live in a global village, so make use of both. In this contemporary world whatever is good for a child – foreign or local, for example French and ICT are crucial in our world today. But because these are some other people's cultures we have to be sensitive about it. (French Teacher)

Observations

Nowhere was the epistemic (knowledge) interaction more useful as during observations of practice. English is used as the lingua to construct knowledge and convey meaning; the application of developmentalist theories to child development; sourcing funding from international bodies (WB, IMF, UNICEF, UNESCO among others); dependence on intellectual networks within Europe and the United States; literature and text-books from other parts of the world; exemplars of model showing foreign connections; and the ideological leanings to training children to transcend Ghanaian boundaries – as an indicator of success . a Perhaps, this explains the immediacy of colonial explications – by stakeholders, as ways to explain away or justify these ‘global – superior’ and ‘local – inferior’ relationships, insofar as the epistemic transactional realms are concerned.

Focus Group

On the subject of the relationship between developed and developing world on knowledges, the FG considered the emergent view that all knowledges were essential, regardless of their origins (in the developed or developing world). Often discussion appeared to explain away current overdependence on foreign or global templates; with justifications based equally on the global terrain. Collectively, participants shared a unanimous view that with the world now increasingly seen as ‘a global village’; it was certainly impossible to avoid the effects of global initiatives such as ECCD. On this topic, there seemed a sense of resignation, of fate, that the local in all its myriad essentials constituted a marked point in the global scheme of things: therefore, at some level the local was implicated within the global. This is in

partial resonance with the world cultural theorists' view of isomorphism across the globe, among institutions such as schools and education generally (Anderson-Levitt 2003). GECE School, to the extent of this analysis was merely involved, like all other school contexts globe-wide, in processes – to achieve a local fit and meaning. As a critique of local attitudes, the spirit required for locally produced knowledges to emerge and flourish appear to lag and was often not encouraged. Such dissonance only offers more traction to hegemonic discourses, in the field of early childhood education. As argued in an earlier chapter, these attitudes gradually sabotage and obfuscate local indigenous knowledges, thus privileging others without those contexts. The staff participants in the FG engaged with the subject of local culture and the need for its emphasis in the early years.

GECE 3: The mother tongue of language (L1) is important for children. Because that is their culture...remember that culture is overall the way a group of people live. If we don't groom our children in our culture they will be lost. Every tribe have their culture: how to behave, live with people, manners, and decency. But we all respect life, it is not difficult.

GECE 7: Dress code should be taught and enforced as part of culture; decency rather than copying Europeans. I know it is difficult because of availability and cost: with advanced technology products from our local tailors are fading out. Local materials (textiles) are more expensive than the foreign imported stuff (the bend down boutique). Sadly, most of the Whites like our stuff like fuugu (tartan smock) and wax print because they are beautiful...we have to adopt it as our culture.

5.1.7.3 Theme 3 – Status Connotations in Childhood Geographical Positioning and Understandings

Interviews

The data from interviews seemed to show that stakeholders perceived childhood, and social status, in the Ghanaian context in terms of the geographical positioning (physical location) of the child. To that extent, conceptualisations of childhoods within northern cultures differed with the south of Ghana. In a sense, a perceived North–South divide in socio-economic development have caused entrenched positions on the dire circumstances of children from the north. These attitudes often portray a deficit model highlighting inequities and inadequacies in education, local culture, economic development among others; summarily as inferior (not modern) to that of southern Ghana.

ECCD is only recent in the North; it started a long time ago in the South. The good school exam results there make a lot of people believe that a good foundation and better preparation for primary will help get best performance by the time they get to senior high school. With such a good foundation they can compete with their fellows in the South. (Nursery 2 Staff)

You see education started from the coastal areas like Sekondi, during our colonial masters before coming to the North. The whites wanted a certain kind of labour force. So, when they introduced their way of life through education; with a particular aim in mind, so that their needs will always be met. Look at us in the North, the history of ECCD is just 20 years old. (Proprietor 1)

Observation

Within the culture of the North, childhood is conceptualised as a phase of life that beckon an even closer relationship within a community – not only of father and mother. As a community, comparative to the South of Ghana, the slow pace of development in the North (of Ghana) has prompted tags of ‘underdeveloped’ or less civilised, among commentators. The South’s (of Ghana) early exposure to colonialism in all its mastery and force predisposes many to the quick rationalisation of its proximity to the ‘modern’. Similarly, with continuing urbanisation, the cosmopolitan characteristics of its major cities (Accra, Kumasi, Sekondi/Takoradi etc.) give-off an aura of importance and development. Constructions of childhoods, in the contextual realities of Northern Ghana, seemed to depict these

characteristics: inferior childhood experiences in the North relative to the South. ECCD, therefore, as in education historically, has a certain topicality and newness in its appeal in the region. Observations showed that schools like GECE, within the region, consequently perceive their success in their ability to achieve parity or near-parity, with counterparts in the South of Ghana. Therefore, in the ways that these differences result in localised meanings of childhoods; globalised meanings merely accentuate those differences, further resulting in functional disarticulations of ECCD.

5.1.7.4 **Theme 4 – *Indigenous Conceptions of knowledge, childhood, and the world***

Interviews

GECE School practitioners appeared to contextualise and interpret their work, in early childhood education, and their understandings of childhood, showing some awareness of their local culture. Among common references were: cultural childhood upbringing and rearing practices; historical explanations for social change (the role of women in particular); the place of school and its potential; possible conflation of education and culture – a fusion of the global in the local; foreignness of education; alienation; and borderlands pre-emptive of increasing alignment of the local to the foreign. Culture was captured as: values (harmony, respect, reciprocity, being each other's keeper, good manners, history and tradition, religion and folklore); also, as language (the mother tongue as First Language – L1) and performativity; as celebratory (festivals, funerals, naming and marriage ceremonies); as creativity (artefacts, music, drumming and dancing). Interestingly, these explications reveal disjunctions – in the expressed wishes to include local content – contrary to the practice at GECE School.

It is very important; education is about the known to the unknown. If a child already knows about their culture (local language etc.) before imported knowledge then it is good education. The local culture is what is concrete for the child the imported knowledge is all abstract to the child: so

teaching from the concrete to the abstract is good. When we celebrate in this school we dance and play local music; the children like to dress up in local dress, especially at graduation, they danced 'Baamaaya' (local Dagomba dance). Our culture is important and that is why a Ghanaian Language is compulsory at the Senior High School examination. (Primary Two Staff)

Our local culture is what makes us. If you don't have roots then you are lost. Even the so-called negative cultures that we have, we have to learn them in order to navigate away from them. In my culture, things like harmony, reciprocity, being each other's keeper, respect, history and tradition, our folklore, and language are all very important. But due to many languages, as colonised people we simply adopt English to have a common lingua. (Primary Science Teacher)

Observations

In GECE School, content of practice contained scant references to what could be authenticated as indigenous knowledge. In lesson observations, teachers will cite a local example to scaffold learning; with the oft-repeated tokenism of the local dialect as signalling indigenous knowledge. For example, an observed lesson on Religious and Moral Education (RME) with P2 I reflected on how local content featured in the lesson process (Figure 5.10).



Figure 5.10 Religious Studies Book (Festivals)

Cultural Connotations	Values	Language	Celebratory	Creativity
Meanings and typologies	Religions Islam and Christianity	English Some Dagbani and Arabic words	Festivals: Christmas Eid	Moon sighting The Cross Making Hampers/Gifts Symbolic sacrificial slaughter
Data from classroom observation and post-observation interviews	Way of life hence culture: prayer, God, mosque, church, charity and Public Holiday Very natural links for children's home experiences	'chu'u' (eid) 'Sara' (sadaqah) Eid ul Fitr Eid ul Adha Ummah Khutbah (Sermon)	Festivals likened to the Damba and Bugum festivals Both celebrate historical stories (conflation of culture and religion)	Pictures in books as examples (Muslim congregation)

Table 5.10 Reflections on Content of P2 Religious Studies Lesson

Equally, some confusion prevailed on where to source such knowledges, their curricular relevance (even the local mother-tongue), and significantly how it defined the future trajectories of childhood and children from the North. The inflexibility of prescribed GES curriculum – tailored to standardised exit tests – meant that little room existed in GECE School to consider and reflect on indigenous approaches to learning and child development. Nsamenang (2011: 239) raises the issue of relevant knowledges to childhoods in such contexts:

Within Africa's cultural worlds responsibility is more valued than mentalistic abilities or intelligence of and by itself... Cultures vary in the importance they attach to certain skills, in the combination of intellectual and other human abilities that are called upon in any given context, or in the order in which specific skills are acquired and put into practical matters. Africans cherish intelligence not as an end in itself...but as it is associated to serving human needs or as it improves people's social competences.

Focus Group

Participants reflected on the question of indigenous conceptions of knowledges and role of research. It remained a contentious subject as staff expressed a range of views on the issue of indigenous potentialities.

GECE 1: *The ideas on psychology of children and the research on ages and stages (Piaget) are important everywhere. As a global village, teaching and learning materials are universally applied.*

GECE 7: *I don't know but I think that because the professionals and experiences here are local; only the materials come from other sources. Phonetics are foreign but because we are colonised people we accept them.*

GECE 4: *Can you write an application letter in your local language? It doesn't make sense. It's too confusing and we are not trained in all the local languages to be able to teach the children. May*

be at home the culture can apply, but in school things are different and children need something different from home experience.

**5.1.7.5 Theme 5 - *Mis/Understandings of the role of education:
Localised meanings of a global phenomenon***

Interviews

In a general sense, as perceived from interactions within GECE School, education and its role is appreciated through a dual lens of the global and the local. A title to Kathryn-Anderson Levitt's book (2003) – *Local Meanings Global Schooling* – summed up the attitudes of the vast array of stakeholders on this topic. While stakeholders articulate a sense of delayed exposure to education, chronologically, between Northern and Southern Ghana; education generally is the taken-for-granted phenomenon that has always been there – a constant, as most saw it. The sum of meanings include: a useful colonial relic; foreign in its conception; education as academic and intellectual pursuit; strict according to standards as best practice; as a lifeline for less privileged; tool for socio-economic development; civilising phenomenon and link to the outside world. As early childhood education is largely conceived as education – with no prevalent alternative conceptions – it is imperative that these characteristics outlined are identified as much for ECCD as to education, generally. Within the local community, there are no services with a specialist designation – as childhood or even early childhood services: the closest service, and from this research the only service, is school (interchangeably perceived as education by stakeholders).

What the children get is only unique to the school: at home it is just the mother tongue, here they speak good English; learn the best ways to behave; good manners; hygiene, disease prevention; this is also where they learn to read and write. And this means they are ready for school.
(Kindergarten 1 Staff)

Both education and schooling. The two go together. In education we teach them to read, write and manners; and the routine attendance means that it is schooling. (HT)

I think we offer them education not schooling. This is just a preparation for normal schooling. We teach them about manners – eating, talking, greeting – not just how to read and write. By being here they also get an understanding of their biology. So it is education not schooling. (Primary 1 Staff)

Observations

Observations were conducted alongside interviews to strengthen the generation of data. GECE School by its character, required the application of the observation method to gain a fuller understanding beyond the conduct of interviews. Observations assisted with the triangulation of data, as other sources of data could be verified against real observed phenomenon and practice. GECE School operated a structured, standardised, and institutionalised methodology to impart knowledge. Staff interchangeably used the terms education and schooling to convey the same meaning. With the global standing of education, as a given (taken for granted) phenomenon, a summation of attitudes and observed happenings variously portrayed local meanings, albeit, muddled with misperceptions of global education. Routinely, childhoods are lived within these contexts: however, questions of what, why, how and when to educate appeared not to matter, in relation to local praxis. Such reflexivity, and its typical absence in this case school, resonates with the unquestioned and unprepared subscription to ECCD: almost internalised, as it is in vogue globally. Timetables (see Figure 5.11) contained the standardised subjects of English, Mathematics, and Science, among others.

NURSERY TWO (2) TIME TABLE											
DAYS	8:00 - 8:30	8:30 - 9:00	9:00 - 9:30	9:30 - 10:00	10:00 - 10:30	10:30 - 11:00	11:00 - 11:30	11:30 - 12:00	12:00 - 12:30		
MONDAY	LANGUAGE ART		SCIENCE	K A E R B	NUMBER WORK		NUMBER WORK	ENVIRON. STUDIES	STORY TIME		
TUESDAY	LANGUAGE ART				NUMBER WORK						ENVIRON. STUDIES
WEDNESDAY	CLUB ACTIVITY		CREATIVE ART		NUMBER WORK		SCIENCE	LANGUAGE ART			
THURSDAY	PHYSICAL EDUCATION		NUMBER WORK		LANGUAGE ART				CREATIVE ART	ENVIRON. STUDIES	
FRIDAY	LANGUAGE ART				NUMBER WORK				MUSIC & DANCE		

Figure 5.11 Preschool Timetable (Nursery 2)

As a professional teacher (trained in the UK), the researcher saw little difference, compared to developed world contexts, in the basic workings of GECE school, as an educational institution. The wholehearted adoption of educational models and praxis from the developed world – with foundational structures traced to colonial era – partly explain the exacerbated disequilibrium in optimising local relevance of a global phenomenon. In one of my reflective entries, I lamented: ‘GECE School is part of a global education-to-work conveyer belt in the factory of knowledge’, to convey an interpretation of observed lived realities of stakeholders within early childhood education. If education, and the reasons for it, lack contextual relevance, then it ceases to be the civilising phenomenon in contexts perceived otherwise without it.

Focus Group

Most of the participants applied personal experiences – often emotive – to issues of education generally, and ECCD in particular. A preference for a locally

engineered education system is deemed appropriate, if only practical. In consideration of Ghana's colonial heritage and the vestiges of relationships; the group thought that the country was set up in synchronised with other worlds beyond their contexts. In practical terms, colonialism created the infrastructure of schools, education policy, curricular style, and future trajectories – transcending boundaries rather than locally, and largely reflecting the British educational system. Essentially, the prolonged FG discussion offered divergent stances on ECCD. Some amongst the participants discounted vehemently the ascription of blame to colonialism; while others demanded an indigenously engineered character to education, which was currently sterilised of local cultures.

GECE 7: Education is an investment....as a parent you will have plans even before the child is born. Spend thousands on me today then you shall reap back.

GECE 5: School as a place to attain skills not because it is in fashion. Preparing the child for higher levels. There is a school that children just sleep and eat. Some parents still send their children; In every school they learn

GECE 2: Parents these days know the importance of education. It is very important going to school. Some of the parents don't want their children to miss out on what they missed. Education is still education; whether in the early childhood or at primary stages. At early stages, children learn to socialise and it really helps. They learn from their friends at school (peers). So it is not just the teachers but also from their colleagues.

5.1.8 Major Findings

From the foregoing analytic descriptive accounts of the case study of GECE School, some major issues emerged and are discussed below as findings from the case. The study set out to capture the practice of global ECCD, within the naturalistic settings of a local Ghanaian school (GECE School). The generated RQs led to a choice of case study methodology: with contextual relevance as key to seeking illuminations of the contemporary phenomenon of early childhood. To gauge what understandings have emerged, findings become more intelligible through a reversion to the same initial propositions entailed in the RQs.

1. How implicated is the developed world in the early child education policy, provision and practice in the developing world?

The GECE School case study provided answers to my overarching research question. Perceptions confirmed the inevitability in developed world–developing world relationships, as a result of globalisation. Interestingly, globalisation was not perceived anew: stakeholder perceptions had the embedded understandings of connecting historical encounter with colonialization to the contemporary effects of globalisation. The historical connections of education to colonialism – have similar resonance with ECCD – as a modern phenomenon due to globalisation. In fact, globally-driven ECCD, with effects to adopt and adapt, is to globalisation, what education as a practice was to colonisation. These local meanings, and somewhat resignation to the force of the ECCD argument, forge a sense that the developed world – in determining what models of education are useful – are implicated in the schooling futures of children in the developing world.

2. How is global early childhood education perceived within the local context of Ghana?

As in the previous question on the minority world–majority world relationship on ECCD, GECE School presented what this study termed ‘disjunctions’ emanating from the local practice of ECCD. This is essentially reflected in the imitation of a foreign global phenomenon without due cognisance of the local socio-cultural histories; which ought to constitute an evaluative judgement of the appropriate fitness to the context, culture and circumstance. This tendency accounts, largely, for the disjunctions alluded to. Some instances of these disjunctions gauged during this research would suffice here. There is a perceived alienation and de-contextualisation arising out of the lingering confusion on the use of first (L1 Mother tongue) or second language (English Language) for instruction, among other issues. Also, there is the pervasive appeal of globalised products – knowledges, information, and stuff of material nature (toys, clothing, food,

television) – which results in a disconnection with socio-cultural and historical realities in pursuit of global trends, perceived to be more modern. Moreover, by dint of its developing world status, Ghana appears to apply disparate approaches to resolving its dire economic situation. Such leaps in policy (for ECCD programmes) presenting enormous challenges in education (for instance Primary enrolment) as well as poverty indicators (livelihoods, nutrition and housing amongst them) all engender a policy–practice disarticulation. This has been cited already in the global shifts that switched priorities effectively privileging EFA Priorities Goal 2 (universal primary enrolment) over Goal 1 (expansion and extending ECCD). In the conduct of the case study, such manifested disjunctive relationships became highlighted through the multiple methods applied: documents, observations and interviews and FGs.

3. What are the characteristics of the global–local dynamics on the policy, provision and practice of early childhood education?

In the case study of GECE School, responses to this RQ reverberated with other research questions : the global–local, the indigenous culture, stakeholders and policy, provision and practice, and ECCD as a global phenomenon all found their dénouement in this research question. From both the empirical and theoretical data, there is ample evidence that, despite the good intentions to globalise ECCD, practice in contexts that already present weaknesses in their socio-economic standings equally show such inadequacies in respect of early childhood education. For instance, in the attempts to apply global standards (such as EFA and MDG Goals) to developing world contexts, stakeholders in consideration of their local circumstances; have tended to only partially engage. This tendency has resulted in a nuance that neither satisfies such standards nor meets the required essentials to be deemed local and indigenous praxis. These were quite obvious from observed practice in GECE School, along with the interviews and focus group discussions. This can be seen in the projections to UNESCO through accountability reports on the state of early childhood by the Ministry of Education. The hierarchies present among stakeholders make local agencies of state more beholden to external

institutions: sometimes to look good globally yet achieving minimal successes locally.

4. *What elements informed the development of Ghana's early childhood care and development (ECCD) policy of 2004?*

GECE School provided the answer to whether Ghana needed ECCD programme. Most stakeholders agree unanimously on the beneficial role of having ECCD provision. In a few instances, practitioners highlighted concerns regarding an increasingly younger enrolment (before 3 years), the academic-driven agenda (a curriculum for preschool), and the foreign character of ECCD practice (toys, books, class structure, ideas, policy). Other perceptions showed an awareness of the place of Ghana, within a comity of other nations.

Significantly, the rationale for an ECCD programme had both local and foreign dimensions, based on the perceptions of stakeholders. Firstly, on the local front Tamale, like other big towns and cities in Ghana, has become largely cosmopolitan: the social changes that have occurred have impelled households to domestically comply. With increasingly more women in education, and with higher qualifications beyond basic education, the hitherto role of women, as housewives and structural location within the home (and kitchen) have changed drastically reflecting a more visible female work force, in all sectors of the local economy (farming, retail and wholesale, and the public sector including teaching, nursing, and secretarial vocations). At GECE School, it was the case that both the drop-offs and pick-ups of children (mostly on motorbikes), were done by both parents, hitherto a strictly male affair. This is a reflection on the changing roles of the mother and father within the domestic arena. Even the phenomenon of involvement in the children's lives itself, is in response to such societal changes; the highlighted concerns on security and safety are new social challenges attributed locally to increasing urbanisation.

The second issue is the global trends at introducing children at much younger ages to schooling and education – the practice of early childhood education. The influences on local educational practices by global knowledge products, deemed foreign but beneficial, have altered attitudes to education. Stakeholders, in conformity with trends across the globe, articulated similar views for ECD practice: to prepare and make children ready for primary education; to gain better futures; to address the inequalities and state of deprivation in the Northern Region, among others. In terms of a global–local relationship, this case school, in its provision and practice, displayed commonalities with what could be available in other parts, even wealthier parts of the globe. Like the wind of compulsory schooling and education, it is essentially the case that a Ghanaian ECCD programme – local or foreign – was going to emerge eventually.

The data suggested lots of positive things that ECCD has brought to the community. Parents cited the need to attend to business and work as the reason for enrolling children; and the fact that such provision existed in the community was rated positively. In conversations with children, little sense was garnered that they saw ECCD provision, in other than positive light. Their perceptions that they were with friends, took special food to school, had birthday celebrations because they worked hard at school, as well as their love for staff and learning all instantiate rationales for ECCD.

5. How does Ghana's local context and culture feature within current ECCD policy, provision and practice?

The quest is to seek out the considerations given to local, contextual, and cultural realities (with consequential reflection on praxis in GECE School) when framing such phenomenon as a global praxis, with indigenous contexts. In this case school, culture was seen as the defining element of a people without which 'we are lost': the mother tongue, dress, dance, music, festivals, history, performativity, and values. This is a contentious area of practice: the reality is that ECCD is conceived

in other-than Ghanaian context and culture; and therefore, the local indigenous culture has to merely adopt and practice.

Effectively, the interaction while divergently diverse is ultimately aimed at making ECCD work, within this context. Interview, documentary and observational data, concordantly, point to this as a crucial area of disjunction. Children are exposed to contexts more foreign to their daily social and cultural reality: English as language of instruction; texts and books with exemplars of events, activities and practices that are mostly European; a curriculum driven by academics with little, and sometimes vague references to the local culture; as well as conceptualisation of childhoods with mere salutary nods to the local culture. The issue remains on what an alternative (culturally appropriate practice) to ECCD would look like. From the perceptions of stakeholders; some promise prevails in generative leases that offer privileges to indigenous knowledges effectively leveraged by local culture and context. In the group interview with parents, one retorted:

I don't work but these days it doesn't matter; everyone needs to send their children to school. Although, I am sometimes busy at home, I love my children and can still look after them. But people would be looking at me and asking questions; thinking that maybe I am poor or I don't like my children to do better like other children. (Parent)

From this perception, one gets the sense that some kind of domesticated provision – allowing a blend of public/private (government/family) community-based provision. Perhaps, this is more suited to indigenous contexts and the general socio-cultural circumstances that prevail. Conspicuously missing, ironically, are such complimentary provisioned child carers, pervasively practiced in the West.

6. *How influential are stakeholders on ECCD on matters of policy, provision and practice?*

In this case study (GECE School), stakeholders as adapted from the 2004 Policy, consisted of the management staff, teaching staff and practitioners within preschool, the parents, the GES, the ECCD Regional Committee (Coordinator), the National Nursery Teacher Training Centre (NNTTC), and the Ministry of Education (Government of Ghana ECCD Policy 2004). These are seen as the people who mutually affect and are affected by early childhood education. In the main, perceptions varied accordingly; with a hierarchy depicting a top-down power relations. The local stakeholders involved in the daily functioning of the school (parents, children, and staff) mostly felt that they did not matter, in consultations on educational issues. This view extended to the new policy framework on ECCD: a personal copy of the 2004 policy document was donated to the school, and a joint visit to the GES for the Preschool curriculum, which the school had no knowledge of nor access to.

Using the two referents – the policy document and the preschool curriculum – a critical review of both documents, corroborated by other sources, point to a deep involvement by international actors (UNICEF and the WB for example) in the production and continuing resourcing of the ECCD sector. This, in juxtaposition to other global influences on the local front – learning and teaching materials for example – conclusively settles the question on who wielded influence on ECCD policy, provision and practice, in settings such as GECE School.

Considering that this research, essentially, is about children and childhood; their stakeholder status has relevance here. The received composite ECCD practiced in Ghana, implied that all that was required was children to populate the provisioned settings. Be that as it may, child interview data suggested various understandings relative to their participation in ECCD:

I like this school very much. My mum and dad give me nice things because I am a good boy coming to school...when I work hard I can help other people.

...to work hard. And become a nurse to help people.

Parents on the other hand offered insights on their role as stakeholders: significantly, parental perceptions were suggestive of lack of control over provision. They merely utilised what was provided to their children with no input. In fact, there is a mutually-reinforced stance on provision: schools provide such services in awareness that parents require such facilities to free them up. However, in reality while the Children's Act (Act 560) emphasises the centrality of parents and the family setting as the primary realm for children's welfare; the character of ECCD policy, provision and practice, merely reduced them to feeding schools with children and resources. For staff and the other adults within schools, they perceived their role at the practice end: staff did not see themselves as partners in policy formulation, but simply waited to be handed down new policies such as ECCD.

A prevailing hierarchy among stakeholders feature strongly in the influences they wield on ECCD policy formulation; as well as in subsequent provision and practice. Major local key stakeholders (proprietors and the community for example) evidenced inadequacies; especially in relation to the trajectories policy assumed. There was a lax and limited regulatory framework from government – explained as offering an enabling environment –which propelled growth of provision. Of significant note, at the pinnacle of control, locally, were the Ghana Education Service, the Ghana National Commission for Children (state agencies) and the ministries – Ministry of Education as well as the now renamed Ministry of Women and Children (Ministry of Gender Children and Social Development). The national oversight responsibility for children exercised implied that they, especially the Ministry of Education, served to represent collectively all ECCD stakeholders on the global front thus becoming the essential conduit for the transmission of global ideas, precepts and practices, as they affect education and children generally. Ultimately, these stakeholder influences graduate upward; devolving power to global actors that effectively dictate such global phenomenon as ECCD and their subsequent trajectories. Among the copiously cited are: The United Nations and its agencies, the World Bank and the IMF, Childhood INGOs (Agha Khan, Save the Children, and Bernard van Leer Foundation among others) and powerful countries of North America and Europe.

5.2 Part II: Case Study Two – Naaya Early Childhood Experimental School (NECE School)

5.2.0 Background

Naaya Early Childhood Experimental School (NECE School henceforth) is a privately-owned faith-based Basic School. It is located within the Yendi Municipality which is about 91 kilometres (approximately 58 miles) from Tamale, the Northern Regional Capital town. The school is set within the community that is diffusely rural, despite its semi-urban classification. As a basic school, it comprises of a preschool and a primary school within the same setting. Initially started with about twelve students, in 2008, the school now has on its roll of students over 600 children. NECE School is sited among a community of schools on the outskirts of Yendi, in proximity to the village of Kugu. The Kugu village, as Yendi itself holds traditional and cultural relevance for locals; due to its nexus to the traditional chieftaincy of Dagbon. The Yendi municipality plays host to the paramount chief – the Yaa Naa (overlord) of the Dagbon traditional area. This school is therefore essentially sited within a locality steeped in tradition and culture.

By its outlook, NECE School sees itself as a faith-based privately owned school. The school enjoys the support of the Baptist Convention in Ghana and abroad: its founder describes himself as a missionary on a mission to do what Jesus would have done if he encountered Yendi. Although, Yendi is predominantly Muslim, the founder (a Ghanaian Baptist Missionary) believed that education, as previously used by other missions, was the surest way to reach out to advance the gospel and win souls for Christ. As a researcher, curious about this missionary zeal, it soon emerged that this school was over-subscribed – despite the fact parents signed up to a declaration (of faith) that the school functioned on a Christian ethos. The success of NECE School, in the words of the proprietor, ought to be judged on the four developmental realms that marked Jesus's own life story. In an interview, the

Proprietor of NECE School quoting St Francis of Assisi – ‘Preach the gospel if necessary use words’, insisted that:

The Gospel is the foundation for NECE School: Jesus grew up in Wisdom (intellectual development); Stature (physical development/good heart and sound mind); favour with Man (social competence); and favour with God (spiritually sound) (Luke 2: 52)...Mbiti insists that the African is intrinsically religious or spiritually...in every sense from the cradle to the grave.

NECE School is registered as a basic school with the Ghana Education Service (GES). Although private, it adopts the regulatory framework of the GES. The curriculum pursued leads to the same statutory standardised test – Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), at exit point of basic school. The school, on its foundation experimented with the founder’s own children (four girls) with a few other children. By the first examination diet, NECE School had established its niche, as most of the candidates had passed the examinations (BECE). Its building style, housed in a typical compound house – currently a rented property, allows for proximal contact befitted to the developmental needs of the children catered for. NECE School offered a feeding programme for children, mostly an element of government (public school) provision in rural settings. This always had a communal feel about it: all children were scheduled periodically, from the youngest, to sit on the floor or squat and eat their meals together, similar to their natural behaviour at home. The founder indicated that this nutritional element supported the biblical wisdom of growing in stature.

As a school routine, NECE School expects children to arrive at 7:30 am: with varying closing times between preschool and primary school – at 3:00 pm and 4:00 pm respectively. The preschool arrangements start from the age of 3: with classrooms named after the founder’s children. Provision is mainly for ages 3–4, 4–5, 5–6 years (six rooms of A&B arrangement); Staff–child ratio of 1:25; and seatwork of rows of desks in groups all facing the direction of the teacher at the front. At early primary (Primary 1 and 2) classes ran a dual stream (A&B); following GES subjects among them English, Mathematics, Science; and Staff–child ratio of

1:40, in most cases. Timetables for lessons show a variation between preschool and primary (between 30 minutes to 1 hour): preschool operates a loose schedule; with clearly defined times at primary covering five subjects in a day. Every day starts with an Assembly of the whole school: the students say their pledges to the Ghana Flag, the Holy Bible, and the Christian Flag. They sing a couple of songs and march to a drum-beat to start their classes.

NECE School was pursued as a replication case study: with the first case completed within GECE School in the Tamale Metropolis. As a researcher, I made a weekly commute to Yendi (Monday to Friday) returning to Tamale for the weekends. In all this lasted for a period of 7 weeks. Such an extensive immersion within NECE School gave the opportunity to follow and understand naturally present and occurring situations more intensively, in particular, in ways that it reflected among the *staff*, *children*, the *school building* and environment, the *educational experiences*, and overall the interconnected *relationships* that prevailed within these arenas. In keeping with the scope of the first case, this case (NECE School) replicated the descriptive layout and analytical framework, as before.

5.2.1 The School

NECE School is located in the Kugu village, on the outskirts of Yendi; among a community of other schools. Among the schools in the area, NECE School is the newest, with the oldest school dating back to Ghana's pre-independence in the 1950s. Although a new school structure is being built, the current structure is a rented house, constructed originally as a residential compound house, and not designed as a school. The house accommodating the preschool is just spacious enough for the preschool; therefore, the primary school adjoins (not built-in) the preschool as three separate blocks (P1–P6). Due to the scant accommodation, the Junior High School is about a mile away, along the main road to Kugu village. By design, the rooms within the preschool were simply that – rooms – and not classrooms: their sizes are small even considering that 25 children and a staff are in each classroom.

5.2.2 The Staff

NECE School had a teaching staff roll of 34: nearly 9 of them working in the preschool and the remainder working from primary one to JHS 3. In preschool, due to the smaller room sizes, there were twenty-five children with one teaching staff; whereas at the basic level (additional outer buildings to the compound house) the bigger rooms had in most cases over 40, even 50, children with one subject teacher at a time. As a recruitment policy, the school worked with young graduates with Senior High School (SHS) certificate; none of them with any teacher training. The only professionally qualified teacher at the preschool and primary school was the School Principal (Head Teacher). It was a common perception among staff, that one just needed to care enough and be passionate about children: therefore professional training and certification did not matter. It was a very youthful staff, with ages averaging 20/21 years: with some staff accommodation (close by the school) allowing for concentration on the teaching job.

It was clear from interviews and observations that most of the learning about children and childhood took place on the job: the theoretical understandings that underpinned practice was mostly lacking. Staff understood their work with children, largely, in educational terms – to impart knowledge to the children. Another characteristic of NECE School was that, the Christian missionary drive was not visible in the recruitment of staff: on the contrary they were mostly mixed – Christians, Muslims and others, as one gathered from immersion in the setting. Staff observed and interviewed, in many instances, exhibited lack of depth of knowledge, of what education, children, childhoods, and the concepts that defined their meanings. As evident from the Focus Group data, an impassioned engagement with the topics lacked the fluidity, and depth, that demonstrated expertise and competence in dealing with the subject of ECCD. The use of such inexperienced, often non-professional, staff deserve attention. This attitude is a reflection on the understandings of what education, and early childhood education for that matter is. This was justified by the school management, on grounds of activating the youth through job offers; as well as that these youthful teaching staff

appeared more dedicated and unhindered by wider family concerns. From the research, in this case school, the calibre of staff ill-fitted the job description: it almost appeared that ‘any adult would do’ attitude to staff provision for the early childhood phase. Furthermore, and because of lacking skills, teaching staff reduced encounters with children to a strict enforcement of an academic regime – learning mainly by rote and a didactic teacher-led instruction. Finally, it was obvious during interactions across the range of stakeholders, within NECE School, that financial considerations played a part in the recruitment of unskilled and unprofessional staff. Context was relevant here: NECE School’s setting within a less affluent municipality implied that however desirous of a commercial intent, it could not charge higher school fees. With lower earnings, as school income, coupled with a missionary intent to mitigate the poverty challenge, meant some compromise had to be made on qualified teacher recruitment. It did appear though, that the youthful staff simply remained grateful they had jobs in the first instance.

The foregoing characterisation of the staff had an exception: the Proprietor of the school. With little education, by way of further educational qualifications, the proprietor is very well-travelled – mostly in the United States. In fact, the US plays a continuing role in some of his ‘influences’ as he calls them: library is stocked with American school graded text books and novels; second-hand desks and used computers; even recently an American-style yellow school bus, among other influences. In all cases, the proprietor used his ‘connections’ within the mission and contacts within the US, to continually improve the functioning of NECE School. As a member of staff external to the setting, but frequent enough to manage and offer guidance, the proprietor is an embodiment, solely, of the vision and wherewithal that runs NECE School. External to the school, but entangled with the collective missionary objective, the proprietor is engaged with the community: providing and distributing goods and services (for example shoes and mosquito nets); anti-poverty campaigns through provision and improvement social amenities (schools, water facilities such as wells and boreholes); and opening up (‘planting’ in the words of the proprietor) churches in the North-Eastern parts of Ghana. Cleverly and evangelically couched: ‘you cannot meet me and not feel my Christianity’ (Interview with Proprietor). A level of posturing akin to caricatures –

in colonial times – when locals en route to church on Sundays returned home on encountering a ‘white man’: because they had seen God (Achebe 1958).

5.2.3 Educational and Learning Experiences

The NECE School case study evidenced certain nuances in approach to learning – in the experiences and the opportunities that it presented to children. Stakeholders subscribed to an early childhood facility, with a totally different – even literally foreign to the context – philosophy. Markedly developmentalist, the case school infused this with a theological framework – from a distinctly biblical rather than theoretical positioning. The effectiveness of learning experiences, in the words of the proprietor ought to be judged along the evaluative framework of the Four Developmental Phases of Jesus’s life. Interpretively, Jesus grew up in: *Wisdom, Stature, Favour with Man, and Favour with God*. On entry to NECE School is the broad and visible inscription: ‘Transforms Futures, With Adventure, Creativity and Truth: Through the Power of Christ’. It is instructive the daily decontextualizing that took place in children’s lives. Majority of the children from Muslim homes would be acclimatised to Arabic style instruction (at home or non-formal institutions). Such doubling in their lived realities reflected the African triple heritages Nsamenang and Pence (2008) allude to; in making a case for ECD in SSA. It still remains, the question of what a visibly Christian provision implies within a predominantly traditional and Muslim community, such as Yendi.

It is significant to note that the school operates on a GES curriculum: but as a private institution it is allowed variations in areas of emphasis. As early childhood education was treated as education, the learning programmes for children reflected, frequently, a desire for children to experience something different, within NECE School. Therefore, with a strategic objective, the school provided buses to aid travel to and from the diffuse habitations; this facilitated early commencement of lessons – punctuality; school uniform; provided food on site to engineer certain particular behaviours (love, community, health and hygiene); help-yourself water dispensers outside classrooms; water closet (WC) toileting facility; a library and an ICT room; and a fatherly, even grandfatherly personality, as a Principal with whom children

interacted with ease. For NECE, all these contained experiences that were novel, untypical, aspirational, and motivational: a desire for a provision that gave a contrastingly modern feel – in juxtaposition to a vastly diffused rural population with minimal exposure to such levels of innovation.

Besides the objective to give children quality education: for most of what teachers 'learnt and recited' (as captured in my observation protocol) to children – in attempts to impart knowledge, it had no explicit 'missionary' intent. Specifically, tailored subjects, motivated by GES curriculum for basic school, were timetabled in similar ways for both preschool and primary school. Among them, English, Mathematics, Science, Environmental Studies, Creative Arts, Physical Education, Dagbani (local language), French and Library and ICT. During the study, a weekly test was organised (known across the school as 'Principal's Test') across preschool and the primary school. Children expressed awareness and readiness to do the tests as there were awards issued for the best performing pupils, at the end of the term. These were justified on grounds that the children needed to master certain skills to progress through the various stages till the exit examinations at JHS 3 – the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE).

5.2.4 Relationships and Interconnections

Insofar as school life at NECE was concerned, certain interconnections revealed in the relationships among stakeholders characterised the naturalistic occurrences within this social setting. Ordinarily by themselves, teaching staff, children, parents, the school and the community of other stakeholders are meaningless: they become meaningful in relation to each other, and others, in a web and network of connectivities within and outside of NECE School. For instance, the designation of teaching staff (and sometimes as Sir/Madam) imply a task description necessarily involving children; with further extensions to home, a curriculum, a regulatory body (GES), and also the community (of culture and identity), even transcending national boundaries.

Crucially, such networks and interrelationships took a pronounced stature, in NECE School, for several reasons. Firstly, as an openly Christian school with a predominantly Muslim students; it seemed strange the application of a theological framework (of holistic development) in disregard of the contexts of these children. Second, the deliberate and frequently familial contacts among staff, children, and parents (pick-up and food services) made school a mere extension of the community – simply a slice of the real society. Thirdly, the ambition to achieve excellence in quality and outcomes, as well as attain parity with other provisions for children – in the South of Ghana and abroad – involved a constant tweak of provision and practice: incorporating global best practice within a local and indigenous provision. Finally, as a foundation for its existence, NECE School's Christian rootedness has predisposed it to several influences: the Baptist Mission Convention at home and abroad; funders with the objective of making a difference in poor communities; and significantly the attempts to depict ECCD, as a modern equivalent of what missionaries of the colonial era achieved – with the introduction of education.

5.2.5 Yendi Municipality

Yendi Municipality is the second most important township within the Northern Region: especially for Dagombas, the dominant tribe. This is the case because Yendi is the traditional capital of Dagbon (the domain) – and is home to the Yaa Naa (the Dagbon overlord). With a current population of approximately 118, 000 out of a Northern Regional population of nearly 2.5 million: it constitutes about 5 percent of the population in the region. Yendi municipality is largely rural (56 percent); with the rest living in urban and semi-urban townships. There is a near parity in the distribution of population between males and females: and the age dependency ratio is 93.3 percent. Children constitute 48.3 percent of the entire population. In Yendi, about 68 percent of the people are Muslim, followed by traditionalists of about 13 percent, then a 17 percent Christian, and others including non-religious, form the remainder of population. Nearly 63 percent of over 11 year olds are classed as not literate.

With a hugely youthful population, about half of the population are in school attendance: of these 21 percent are in some preschool provision. Economically, 65 percent of the population are engaged within Agricultural occupations – mostly crop farming (in 95 percent of cases), followed by wholesale and retail businesses amounting to 13 percent. Private and informal sectors engage more than 90 percent of the population; which means a small public sector of less than 5 percent. Housing is basic, the usual compound house style, designed to maximise population of household residents; and for communal living. The majority lack toilet facilities and less than 2 percent have WC (water closet) facilities. The environmental and social set up is not so varied from Tamale Metropolis, which is about 91 km away. Another common feature is the fact that Dagombas constitute the dominant tribe in both towns, showing similarities in cultures, traditions, histories and attitudes.

Culturally, Yendi municipality is replete with relics of tradition and a rich history of colonial exploits. They include Babatou's grave – a famous slave trader; the German cemetery – a place of internment of German colonisers; Adibo Dali – a legendary example of bravery (hoof-prints of a warrior king's horse on a tree); symbolising Dagbon warrior status in a famous battle against German colonisers in 1897; and also Naa Dataa Tua – a famous beheading ground (a stone under a baobab tree) for subjects who had sexual knowledge of any of the many wives of the Yaa Naa. This last traditionally important site for Dagomba traditionalists is only within a mile from NECE School.

Administratively, Yendi Municipality along with the decentralisation of governance, has a Municipal Chief Executive who heads a 45-member Assembly – as the political authority. Complementing the political authority is the traditional authority: Yendi is the seat of the Yaa Naa (the Dagbon overlord) and his presence adds to the weight of authority on all issues affecting the people within the municipality and beyond.

5.2.6 The Case in Context

NECE School case study is a replication study following a successful first case at GECE School. With the similarity of provision sought at the selection of cases, the aim was always to enhance reliability of the study by applying the same methodology to another context. NECE School, similar to the first case had an ECCD provision for children of ages 3 to 8; on the same site; with working knowledge of ECCD policy. Similarity of context was sought as far as the criteria outlined: however once within the setting, other nuanced features emerged through the process (such as the largely rural character of the Yendi Municipality). This had little or no effect on the case study; to the extent that the aim was not a theoretical replication but a literal replication (Yin 2014), of the case study. Such a negligible variation is easily contained within the same methodological framework.

NECE School is set within a diffusely rural municipality, yet in a township with semi-urban classification. An essential feature of this township – Yendi – is its place within the culture and tradition of the Dagombas. With such a predilection to culture, in the lived realities of the people; ascriptions of ‘old-fashioned’ and ‘not modern’ are rife. This caricature, in juxtaposition with the missionary zeal of NECE School, interactively create a new phenomenon. Some question the rationale for the siting of NECE School within Yendi. Also, demographically, with little record of social change and influences – in a largely agriculturally-dependent society – would an educational mission without emphasis on such locally utilisable competencies find meaning within this context? Crucially, Hammersley and Atkinson’s (1995: 7) view that for contextual understandings, the social milieu – where meanings prevail – ardently ought to be sought via ‘intentions, motives, beliefs, rules, and values’. This significantly explains NECE School, in all essentials. Following Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), NECE’s intent on spreading the gospel (the word) via education; is entangled within its motive to alleviate poverty; grounded in normative actions and rules such as feeding, transporting children, and ultimately exposure to civility; are collectively enshrouded within a certain theological basis – a Christian ethos (evidencing beliefs and values highlighted by

the Proprietor). As a case, the eventual meanings sought were gauged through these particularities; that illuminate an otherwise complex phenomenon.

5.2.7 Data and Analysis

The case study of NECE School sought data from a range of stakeholders: 5 parents, 7 children, 7 staff, and 1 Principal/HT. In keeping with the scope of the first case study (GECE School), each of the five themes is followed by the appropriate data from the multiple data generation tools, namely: *interviews*, *observations*, and *focus groups*.

5.2.7.1 Theme 1 – *Early childhood Care and Development as a Global Phenomenon*

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted among children, staff, and parents with a sample of 16 participants: 1 parent group interview (involving 5 participants), 3 children's group interviews (of 7 children), 3 post-lesson observation interviews (with 3 staff), and 1 PT/HT interview.

The understandings from the data gathered in NECE School, on early childhood care and development (ECCD) showed a range of perspectives among stakeholders. ECCD was conceptualised variously as: preschool/pre-compulsory enrolment at age 6; a new education policy for young children; a foundation-builder; theoretically-grounded in developmentalism; as early years schooling; as social and cultural education; as an initiative for poverty alleviation; a phenomenon in vogue; and widely as a global (foreign) phenomenon. During interviews, participants always discussed ECCD along educational and future outcomes: its potentialities for grade enhancements, school retention and attendance; as well as better life possibilities in the future with skilled jobs and contribution to the global

workforce. Rarely was ECCD conceptualised in other terms such as community care, nutritional programme, and on children's health improvements. With its origins elsewhere, rather than a locally engineered programme; ECCD was seen as the latest addition to the educational system that needed internalising. Such was the case with NECE School, where local attempts were made to operationalise a global phenomenon: with resultant disjunctions and ill-alignments to the socio-historical and cultural contexts, as seen from the foregoing.

Early childhood education means to prepare the child for school. It is not normal school, but just the first steps for the child to be familiar with school needs...you see government has now come up with a view that every child must have two years of kindergarten: every primary school must have a day nursery and a kindergarten. It is really a government policy but as you know government policies, some schools currently have them but others don't have; this is typically how government policies operate. (GES Director)

Stronger educational background, stronger at age 4 before primary 1. Only arriving at 6 years – although a right age but it means the child will lack preparation for school. (Principal Teacher)

Observations

Observations were applied as tools of data generation within NECE School. Mostly, these were direct observation of naturally present and occurring events; as well as participant observation in classrooms and in other roles within the setting. The RQs led to the choice and application of this instrument – with the resultant emergent data – analysed and condensed, in alignment, with the following major themes.

Data from observations in NECE School pointed to a convergence of ECCD as the developmental foundations that required an engagement with a learning regime.

Various conceptualisations seen from character of schools (with preschools), pedagogies, and the whole educational philosophy, all pointed to this conception of ECCD. The NECE School case study provided clues to the multiple questions on ECCD policy, provision and practice. In particular: *‘Why is the developed world implicated in the schooling trajectories of children in the developing world?’ (RQ1)*, among others. Direct observation, in many instances, offered crucial pointers to this question: the preschool practice itself, classroom pedagogies, learning materials (books, toys, and recreational facilities), and staff orientation to educational theories from the West, globalisation, universal attitudes to childhood conceptions, and many more.



Figure 5.12 Exemplars of Learning Resources for Preschool

Examples	Source of Influence
School textbooks	Proprietor sourced used textbooks from the US. Vision of achieving similar goals US education offered to children
Feeding	Christian and educational theory: the holistic ECCD idea and Jesus's life philosophy
Bus Transport	US-style yellow busses imported to transport children from home-school-home.
Ethos of the School	<p>Christianity as foundation of the school's philosophy in a predominantly Muslim community.</p> <p>Out of over 240 children, about 165 of them are Muslim. Staff composition was different: 34 teachers; 13 were Muslim.</p> <p>Compulsory Religious Observance (Morning Assemblies)</p>
Class-sizes (staff-pupil ratios)	<p>Preschool–20:1 (teacher/pupil)</p> <p>Primary–40:1 (teacher/pupil)</p>
Education/Learning Experiences	<p>Academic and outcome-based</p> <p>Staff showed workbooks with chronological ages and stages lessons (Developmentalist theory).</p> <p>Target outcomes – Basic Certificate Examinations even from preschool.</p> <p>Pupil expected to learn to speak and write proper English – for future examinations and work</p>

Table 5.13 Observation Data on Provision and Practice

Predominant attitudes and the character of provision and practice rendered education and early childhood education foreign to contexts such as northern Ghana. Most of what children experienced locally, were not the usual novel learning experiences but orchestrated programmes

to influence the entirety of their out-of-home experiences. As captured from the observation of practice of ECCD in NECE School, attempts to buy into global standards offer a clear explanation of the reasoning behind ECCD provision. Such rationale rather than locally integral to the social ontology of children; often appeared increasingly beholden outwardly to foreign ‘nourishing’ sources which challenges ECCD’s credentials as not being authentically local and indigenous.

Focus Group

The research applied FG discussion in one instance with members of the teaching staff at NECE School. In all, seven (7) participants constituted the group, covering topics similar to the first case – GECE School. Remarkably, the current teaching staff indicated that this was the first time they had engaged in such a reflective exercise. A participant, in a later conversation, remarked on the novelty of: ‘being asked to think about what we do; sometimes challenged by colleagues; and thinking through why we have ECCD in Yendi’. In the end, emergent data from the NECE School FG provided relevant information – considered and triangulated by peers – resulting in these findings.

The FG considered ECCD generally, as well as related matters pertaining to: the age of enrolment, early childhood as schooling and education, the importance of local culture and whether ECCD was a foreign importation. The general view by most of the participants was that ECCD needed to consider certain benchmarks for age-appropriateness in enrolment. To name some examples: stakeholders decried the practice of some children below the age of 2 being in some schools, stating that they were too young and still needed motherly attachment; ECCD was seen as a social intervention with schooling and education serving as the panacea to mitigating the social ills; as well as meeting the demand for child care that called for early education in the first place. The last point suggests mutually reproductive relationships among the domains of ECCD policy, provision, and practice. In this sense, policy and provision arise out of the social needs – for example working mothers; while the expected outcomes from practice in schools such as NECE, ought to target the resolution of those policy-determinant issues. It is worth pointing out that some participants in the FG thought there was something fashionable, as a rationale for the increasing enrolment.

ECCD, insofar as it builds on an existing educational framework: sometimes structurally, as reflected in the additions of new buildings – such as preschool – tied to a primary school, is prone to critical questions of its origins. Participants in the FG viewed ECCD as a global phenomenon and a pervasive practice that exemplifies new ways to educate children. While participants individually exhibited extreme passion for their indigenous culture and tradition, they nonetheless felt obliged to fit in with the rest of the global village. On the question of what existed within local culture that needed emphasis within Ghana's ECCD, participants in the FG differed in their views as below.

NECE 1: Nobody would look at us taking children to local places (the Yaa Naa's Palace, or Naa Dataa Tua) as ECCD. Education is modern and we have to use what other people have used and written: since it helped them to become developed.

NECE 3: ...I think we would just stay backward if we should learn just things around Yendi; we will stay and be the same people. See this NECE, the school has shown people that ECCD is good; now others are joining. You see that Yendi also has something that Tamale and Accra have.

NECE 2: Whether ECCD is local or foreign it is still good. But the world is the same now everywhere. If we leave what we have and choose others and what they have, we will come back to the same point – we will all be the same again. Everybody comes to Yendi, they still know that the Yaa Naa is very important: all those from Tamale who come to the palace, it is because we all respect local culture.

Additionally, and closer to this thinking, the emergent view was that ECCD was seen as imported and largely foreign: qualified by the reasoning that local circumstances tempered the global tenets of early childhood education. In equating ECCD to education, the FG participants expressed the view that, even as no one is harmed by the use of the English language to instruct in classes, it still made sense to incorporate aspects of the local culture (L1 or the mother tongue). NECE School as set within Yendi, perhaps exemplified the possibilities for the accommodation of ECCD within the local culture.

5.2.7.2 Theme 2 – Developed World–Developing World Epistemic Interactions

Interviews

NECE School, in all its essential interrelationships and connectivity, displayed an active interaction with the global. By its missionary and evangelical character, NECE School offered an evidence basis that allowed new ways to interpret the developed world–developing world epistemic relationship. As a matter of fact, in whose interest is early childhood education being promoted? An answer to this will settle the axiological and pedagogical considerations that relate to these contexts. Visibly, developing world knowledge products appear to lag and assume an underdog status relative to developed world knowledges. In NECE School, more visibility was given to perceived ‘best standards’ and practices from the US (mainly) and Europe; consequently obfuscating the little that is worth promoting in the developing world context. The arguments put forward in this study about contextualising knowledges suffer a certain deficiency here. The world of education appear highly interdependent: some stakeholders therefore see no need to ‘reinvent the wheel’ (Principal Teacher).

I have greatly been influenced and it creates a dissatisfaction: why should my child not achieve what a child in London can? ...It's a principle of life: everybody eats, we don't eat the same food but everywhere you go people eat.
(Proprietor 2)

Yes, we need a definite programme with a starting point (like ECCD) and a curriculum to guide...we need to teach culture, our culture, to the children. We should never think that they are not important. Here in Yendi, Dagbani as a local language and the culture of Dagombas – their festivals, dress code, etiquette and manners (respect for elderly, greetings, sharing with strangers). It may look very local (or ‘colo’ as the grown up children say) but in later life it becomes what makes you who you are. My view is that the local culture is a gateway to the world – from the known to unknown. (Primary 2 Staff)

Observations

From observations, in this case study, there was almost a virtual renunciation – of indigenous local inputs to ECCD – as reflected in the extent to which NECE School promoted global knowledges, from the developed world. The observation data makes conspicuous some of the contextual dislocations: a private Christian school in a predominantly Muslim community; modernising influences at costs above local affordability. Further, established Western pedagogical practices

(curriculum, learning dispositions, and teaching and staffing cultures) as well as the structural set up (of linking ECCD more closely to schooling) all exemplified the heavy influences of the external on the local. In the reflective diary, for this case study, the researcher wondered how typically ‘a child’ at NECE School represented the average child some few 100 metres down the Kugu village road. During classroom observations, poverty was visibly evident in children’s attitudes despite attempts to mask it via the uniformities of dress-code, bussing of children (transportation), the school feeding arrangement, and other school amenities (such as the water-closet facility). I witnessed very often, children without such basics as pencils and eraser (rubber): in fact, the shout outs during class work, more often than not were calls to borrow from the one child with rubber, by other children. Children used pebbles and corks of bottles as calculator (See Figure 5.13 below). In the light of these contextual circumstances, it was surprising that perceptions reflected an attempt to integrate and assimilate existing global knowledges: making them seem naturally local. These attitudes enveloped the cross-cultural stances to knowledge – except only a minugia of indigenous knowledges featured in this epistemic transaction.

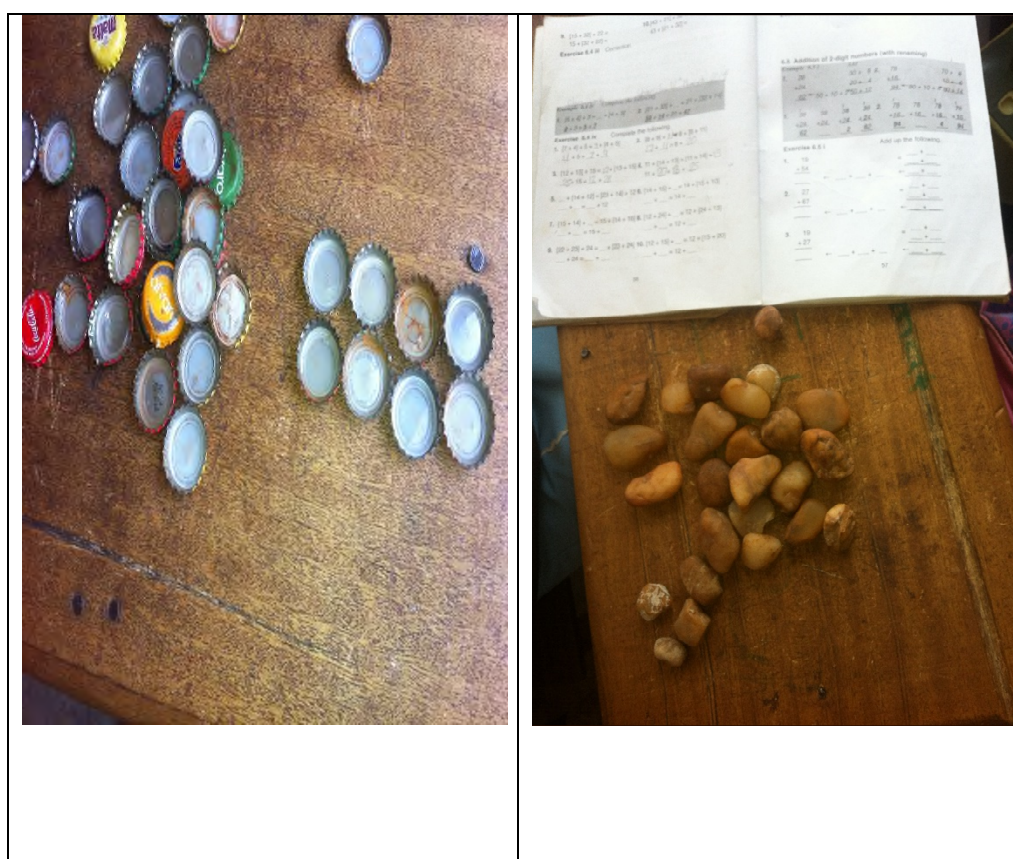


Figure 5.13 Corks and Pebbles as calculator during a Mathematics Lesson

Focus Groups

As a group, the emergent view was that in knowledge terms, between the developed and the developing worlds, there appeared a tendency to seek after global (dominated by developed world) templates and trends. ECCD itself viewed in this light was a manifestation of – not what could not be produced locally – but reflective of the interminable appetite for already existing (global) knowledges. This hankering for imitation notwithstanding, the propensity to regard and co-opt such essentialized views promoted by such universalised ideals, is problematic. The NECE School FG participants conveyed a sense of gratitude; that NECE School provided a modern facility ‘unheard of in the history of Yendi’ (Proprietor).

In many of the examples and instances sited, the tentacles of the developed world, in this educational venture, were never too far away. The FG named their American-style school buses, the computer laboratory, the predominant US text and story books, and the continuing influence and dependence on US sources through knowledge transfer and funding of the school. A participant corroborated an account by the proprietor when he took NECE’s Principal to see ‘schools’ in the US – emphasised as central to the influences that led to NECE School (‘I have seen schools!’ – Interview with Proprietor). Through these, themes like developmentalism and globalised products are cited as significantly influencing practice. During the FG the discussion of the question of global or local proceeded thus:

NECE 1: ... *In this school, the books, lego, toys and these are imported from outside, so the children can learn very well. I think there are some computer games, also imported...this a teddy bear, a doll....all these help them.*

NECE 1: *Much of the activities...poems, songs, rhymes are all foreign and in the English language.*

NECE 3: *We teach children to read and write in a foreign language. But we also teach how we dance, eat, respect to elderly persons. The way a child would communicate in Europe is totally different to a child here.*

NECE 4: ...*Still the foreign aspect is more than the local, I think.*

In sum, schools like NECE School present the ideal slices of the global in the local, albeit a predominantly global phenomenon. The missionary ethos of NECE School surprisingly was not cited in the articulations by staff. This appeared to be a taken for granted reality, in the community, another evidence that the school had internalised and accommodated a phenomenon otherwise

perceived as foreign. Another reason for this could be the lack of a deeper appreciation of the relational entanglements of the school with the outside world, the stakeholders, and the immediate community. This case study as a consequence has shown a level of intensity in its engagement with developed world knowledges, on the proviso that there is no contradiction – in crossing cultures – in same ways as there are no contradictions in the siting of NECE School in Yendi.

5.2.7.3 *Status Connotations in Childhood Geographical Positioning and Understandings*

Interviews

In the NECE School case study, perceptions were rife on how others viewed the setting, and its geographical positioning in Northern Ghana. It is commonplace, the assumptions that northern schools are stereotypically: of poor quality, professional inadequacies, not modern, backward, and traditionally indigenous, among others. This introspection among stakeholders, is yet again an invocation of a perceived North–South divide in Ghana: manifested in a relatively, often generalised, underdeveloped North and developed South. These views were quite obviously distilled from interactions, documents and interviews. ECCD provision, in this context was almost seen dually, as a reaction to what pertains in the South; as well as an attempt to use ECCD to address some inadequacies and inequalities that caused the gap between the North and the South.

There is about 300 year gap between Northern education and the South. From the 15th century castle schools along the coast; when you come to the North...Yendi primary here is the first government built school 1936. Before then we had trade schools: the Germans rendered vocational education in the pre-existing vocations within the locality. First primary school in the North was sited in Gambaga – introduced by the white settlers, followed by Tamale – all these in the 20th Century. Compare...you can see the difference: 15th and 20th Century. (GES Director)

In essence, a comparison can be seen in the global–local pitch of this study: where there seems to be a concentration of knowledge in the global (generalised as developed world); while the developing worlds are generally impoverished of those essential knowledges. The local replay of

these binaries is not unusual. In Ghana, both during earlier colonial exploits and now in widely perceived globalised exposures, contacts have always been prioritised – the South as a first point of contact along the coast; with later trickling down effects to the peripheral North. These explications have become internalised and constituted into local orthodoxies and constructions of childhoods and their futures. Local stakeholders, within the context of the school (parents, children and staff) showed comparisons – on their aspiration to be better – between their local circumstances and the South (lots of references to Accra to mean the South of Ghana).

Observations

As indicated earlier, NECE School's setting within a largely rural Yendi municipality, involves it in the stereotypes that are ascribed to the locality. In the immediate surroundings of the school are highly regarded cultural and traditional institutions (the Yaa Naa's palace, Naa Dataa Tua, German Cemetery among others): directly contrasted by a modernising force that NECE School represented. In conformity, stakeholders commonly explained away certain attitudes deemed 'inappropriate' in such condescending terms as: 'as you know our people here'; 'they never understand...they always prefer to do things the local (traditional) way'. Equally common are the invocations: 'in Accra, or even nearby Tamale, nobody behaves like that'; or 'the children down south are in better schools than what we have in the north'; and 'even our colonial masters liked the south...Accra is the capital and we all want to be there'. These perceptions that colour and have come to define North–South relations (in Ghana), affect the understandings of childhood conceptions. As childhood is constructed within a certain social realm, the case school portrayed children in confounded ways. Within the local northern context, they are seen as inferior in status because they are northern, yet globally their 'Southern' orientation in the developing world complicates this even further. Significantly, these engender complex disjunctive conceptualisations of childhoods – a paradoxical global North/South conceptualisations: a summed up double jeopardy reflected in the local Ghanaian child (a poor Northerner rather than rich as in global North) and in the global sense (a poor Southerner rather than rich in the context of local South).

5.2.7.4 Theme 4 – *Indigenous Conceptions of knowledge, childhood, and the world*

Interviews

Considering the context within which this case study – NECE School – was executed, the social reality reflected a community actively engaged with tradition and culture. The case school presented a contrasting character to the context, thus further heightening the global–local dispute, in this case more vividly. If there was ever a contextual fertile ground for indigenous knowledge and practice, in ECCD, then the case study of NECE School offered the right credentials, considering its contextual setting in Yendi. However, interviews reflected sameness in the pursuit of existing models and pedagogies – in character with the foreign or global phenomenon – yet stringently alienating possibilities of local relevance. In plain terms, the intent to supplant local context and culture practices, disregarding the social realities appeared to accentuate further an already disjunctive relationship.

Childhood in the Ghanaian, or northern context, is divided into early childhood (0 – 2 years) and middle childhood (2 – 6 years)...they have quite different ways of doing things. These different characteristics are then looked at to prepare them accordingly...Programmed learning to formalise learning: all that we do in school may be done at home, but in school these are well-packaged into subjects and appropriately delivered to the child. (GES Director)

We cannot do away with foreign culture: they go hand in hand with our own local tradition which we cannot do away with...if you are teaching a subject like science in English for example, you can use a language like Dagbani ...even in teaching mathematical concepts...to help them understand in familiar terms. But if they can speak English, speak slowly and use as an auxiliary for learning. Also our ways of living: greetings; performance of rites like funeral, outdooring, marriages - Children must understand why these things take place in their communities. (Principal)

Observations

The RQs for this study highlight the possibilities imminent within the local context for alternative knowledges and conceptions of childhood. Such optimism largely stems from what prevails in the

lived realities of contexts, such as an indigenous community grounded in tradition and culture. Observations in NECE School, for most of what is termed contextually indigenous, showed little substance: some rehashed concepts to aid teaching and learning, borrowed and standardised curricular frameworks, pedagogies, and scant references to indigenous context. These remained significant, insofar as they pointed to the disjunctive nature of a global phenomenon such as ECCD: in same ways as the practices are ill-aligned to local socio-historical and cultural contexts. On ECCD pedagogical practice, indigenous knowledges and understandings of childhood cursorily received a polite nod; the constant referent being the seldom utilised local language (Dagbani) – as if it was all that defined the indigene and associated culture. Adults often relived and relayed ambivalent instances of nostalgia: suggesting to the effect that their childhoods differed to the extent that these ‘modern’ children in Yendi were luckier. At the same time, such instances were equally cited as responsible for watered-down emphasis on tradition and culture.

Focus Groups

From the FG discussion, the staff highlighted areas perceived as the domain that indigenous conceptualisations of childhood and knowledges could be based. Among others, the NECE School staff averred that: local language constituted the foundations of indigenous culture; the context of children – their social environment, religion and real circumstances; the historical narrative of the context (namely Dagbon); as well as mutually beneficial areas of global relevance.

NECE 1: *At the age of 3, the child has started learning mother tongue (Dagbani)...the family is the first contact...introduction to the classroom enhances the primary contact. Children like to learn from concrete things – practical knowledge rather than abstract on things they never see.*

NECE 4: *Cultural practices...things that we do as indigenous society...the way we dance and pray...A child gets prepared socially physically, morally and spiritually for the future worlds ahead of them.*

NECE 7: *A child's language is key to functioning in society...the preoperational stage then becomes the most acceptable time to introduce children to ECCD.*

NECE 5: *When a child is young...lots of culture exhibited in school....the way we sing....other things like the way we eat, share, jokes, manners like please, thank you and greetings....all these Ghanaian cultures for children to emulate.*

NECE 1: *These day our dress is bad....we need to emphasise our mode of dressing. We need to teach this to children. Everybody would love our culture....Children copy from movies and practice in our society. The school can teach dressing that is decent to portray Ghanaian culture...*

5.2.7.5 Theme 5 – Mis/Understandings of the role of education: Localised meanings of a global phenomenon

Interviews

The interview with the proprietor of NECE School, summed up the understandings of the role of education:

Your creed determines your conduct...you cannot see me without first seeing my Christianity...and therefore, the mission here is to teach and share Christ-centred love regardless of where we find ourselves...as you know Yendi boasts of 85% Muslims and among the children Muslims are in the majority.

Strangely, education of the sort conceptualised in the case school inherently harboured inconsistencies and contextual contradictions. NECE School, in seeking to conflate education and Christianity, represented a local attempt to globalise phenomena that was already global in character. Crucially, the case school presented education and Christianity as mutually reproductive. These had colonial overtones as the two phenomena walked in tandem; from the history of education in Ghana. In furtherance, the general view held was that, early childhood education was a modern version of what education represented during colonial times. For a start, the traditional and cultural outlook of Yendi, it was expected, required an educational praxis grounded in the socio-historical and cultural realities of the people. As a largely agricultural, and widely rural community for example, it is almost inconceivable that foundations for learning will miss opportunities to foreground such childhoods in their contextual social genesis.

You know we have introduced in the curriculum our culture. Looking at this, we give the culture in a programmed way....different to the way the white man brought it to us. Christian religion, Muslim religion are all foreign. Our

own way of life traditionally is where our culture belongs – e.g. Ghanaian language and aspects of traditional religion.
(Principal)

In one case, a comparison was drawn between regular school and Islamic (Quranic) school system: while both were seen as externally introduced, the Christianity-associated model of school is perceived as unproblematic. However, most of the Muslim children attended these Quranic schools, on a part time basis (sometimes on Saturdays and Sundays). Some commentators refer to this colonial phenomenon as the ‘triple heritage’ of Africa (Nsamenang & Pence 2008: 18): to wit the indigenous African tradition, Islamic-Arab and Western. It is perhaps this accommodating attitude that added to the confidence in the siting of NECE School in this predominantly Muslim community.

We have never built our own infrastructure for education. They were all introduced to us by our colonial masters. But they are good, there is nothing wrong with that. The arrangements like classroom and learning materials are just that....a good system that segregates the children rather lump them together as in madrasah (Quranic Schools) with mixed ages – beginners and experienced – in one room. So, it does not matter that ECCD is foreign. (GES Director)

Observations

The general understanding of ECCD was that it was perceived as both education and schooling. Parents saw the child’s departure from the home – on a school bus – literally, as a modern vehicle to change the life trajectories of their children. Stakeholders within the school setting perceived their role as repositories of knowledge – learnt and recited – to impart to children. As far as early childhood education was concerned, the provisions in policy and practice, showed minimal nuances in approach, relative to conventional (global) educational practice. Reflections from observation: the dexterity of the collaboration to educate school children, the bussing of children to enforce attendance, and the general quest to redeem the community and reduce the challenges posed by poverty; all highlight the attempt to portray ECCD as local guarantees for children’s better futures.

In fact, children, parents, staff and the community collectively viewed their stake in relation to maximising, in relevant opportunistic ways, advantages that early exposure to education offered. Children, similarly to their parents, saw their role as ‘working hard’ to be better when in primary or other indeterminate outcomes; for teaching staff, learning curves that may lead to becoming recognised ECCD professionals, as well as equipping children with knowledge to progress and develop; and for the larger community, ECCD was the novel societal practice, with consequential benefit on overall image and development of the society.

Focus Groups

The FG understood and used interchangeably, education and early childhood education, to mean one and the same thing. Accepted generally as a foreign importation, ECCD was conceptualised as a new phenomenon – in education – that fitted well within the local social structures, among them schools. By this logic, the NECE School was both the actor and the act: representing the global phenomenon, in the local contexts where meaningful practice was possible. The FG regarded education as something benign and desirable: in the varied responses, many articulated a compensatory position: *‘these days parents know that school is important...they don’t want to miss out; their children are getting something good which the parents did not get when they were young’* (FG Discussion). The exceptions to the positive perceptions of education only showed in the deficiencies in the paucity of local socio-historical and cultural realities of the community. The FG raised issues of mother tongue, changing roles of families, new exposures (television, films, media, games, mobile phones, and the internet), and local chieftaincy conflicts, as real in the lived experiences of children at NECE. Thus begging the question: what goes into bringing up children in communities like Yendi? Answers to this reflect in the intentions conveyed in the research questions (RQ4 and RQ5): *Why does Ghana need an early childhood care and development (ECCD) policy, provision and practice? How does Ghanaian culture interact with the policy and practice of ECCD?*

Certainly, the role of NECE School (in the scheme of the global), in the muted ways the FG considered it, point to a less conscious participatory feature. Data however show an active involvement; the school perceived as integral to the production and reproduction of such global phenomenon. Rationales vary but are in accord with global tastes for a skilled work force, in one

rationale or as a school with a civilising mission, in a local context, as another rationale: in aiding local contexts that aspire to ‘meeting’ the global. A global–local rendezvous – distinct in its masking of the local content and context - effectively reveals misunderstandings that affect to the core, the potential meanings and rationales for ECCD, globally.

5.2.8 Major Findings

Research Questions

7. *How implicated is the developed world in the early child education policy, provision and practice in the developing world?*

The NECE School case study shed some light on the issues that implicate the developed world in the schooling futures of children in developing world contexts such as Yendi, in the Northern Region of Ghana. Crucially, the view that ECCD is foreign hold ramifications for its practice. From its policy framework, the character of provision, and the realities in contexts of practice, ECCD in a generalised sense portends a universalising agenda. Although articulated locally as positively beneficial, global ECCD's underpinnings show a Western character. The eventual imitations of ECCD policy (such as the 2004 GoG ECCD Policy); the NECE 'niche' school framework of provision; and the standardisation that unravels in practice within local contexts; collectively support the 'foreign' character claim of ECCD to the developing world context of Yendi.

In this case school, the evidence was never wanting in trying to justify this tendency; helped further by its theological leanings. There was a sense of an 'omnipresence' – giving the 'omnipotence' – of global influences; with characteristic dominance of the US in this case school. From the vision that laid the foundation for NECE School, the resources and funding, the learning and teaching materials, the means of transportation and the ideas guiding best practice, the only local resource probably entailed the stakeholders, who themselves appeared to habitually internalise, sanction and action these influences.

8. *How is global early childhood education perceived within the local context of Ghana?*

The evidence for disjunctions appeared not to elude NECE School: the school itself represented and embodied a disjunction. Stakeholder perceptions were sometimes suggestive of weaker application of ECCD within their setting: this immediately presents a case of the ideal and the imitation. Equally, when deconstructed, the nature of ECCD policy, provision and practice as characterised by NECE School heralds myriad contradictions.

On ECCD policy, there is no doubt that NECE School, among similar other provisions, constructed their practices in haphazard formulations. There was very little awareness and a sense of guidance from an overarching policy framework. The current 2004 ECCD policy, despite its long consultation period, apparently did not reach out to perceived rural and ‘unimportant’ parts of the country, like Yendi. In fact, apart from the Proprietor and the Principal, most staff and practitioners were unaware that such a policy document existed; beyond the fleeting awareness of the new educational framework. Without the benefit of policy guidance and enablement, subsequent dominance by private sector provision, such as NECE School, have further aggravated an existing urban–rural variation in provision, most provisions being sited in urban towns and cities. An increased complexity when content of practice is not underpinned by local considerations as well as the cumulative effect of such unfocused policy and provision – and missed opportunities – result in the disjunctions that enshroud all aspects of ECCD practice in contexts such as NECE School in Yendi.

9. What are the characteristics of the global–local dynamics on the policy, provision and practice of early childhood education?

In the conduct of the NECE case study one of the primary objectives was to highlight perceived disjunctions that becloud the terrain of practice of global ECCD in a developing world context. In NECE School understandings of ECCD as a global phenomenon, ostensibly created an instant binary explication: global (characteristically developed world models) and local (NECE School as a developing world context). As revealed, from the data, the extent of disconnection between the global and the local manifested itself in the mundane elements of policy, provision and practice. Be that as it may, the perceptions of most stakeholders reflected gradations in the nature and degree of the disjunctive relationships. On policy, contemporary local attitudes are a function of the haphazard global understandings of childhoods and children: the quest to universalise precepts

such as human rights and elimination of poverty are deemed ubiquitously warranted. Locally too, both provision and practice appear to exhibit internalised globalised ideals due to a multitude of issues. Among them is the increasingly globalised world with developing parts of the world perceiving a continual need to ‘catch up’ or upgrade of systems and institutional practices – to conform to what is modern and appropriate. Cumulatively, an opportunity cost is heralded; resulting in a sacrifice of contextual and cultural appropriateness to imported provision and practice.

Although NECE School is located within a very deprived traditional community, the high regard for a private provision (fee paying) implied a certain acceptance and capacity, among stakeholders. That said there was evidence of poverty reflected in the basic necessities that children required for school. This contradiction may be due to compromises to utilise ECCD services, if it meant at the expense of other school needs (pens, pencils, shoes, bags, and eraser). Beyond this internal (local) dissonance, the interaction of NECE School with the rest of the globe (global) pointed to a donor–recipient (power-over) relationship: renewing questions of uncertainties – is it voluntarism or is it by coercion? It is important to recognise the power play between NECE School – a recipient of the support; and the predominantly American source – as funders or donors. In some sense, it is almost impossible to disentangle the web of relationships that NECE School entail; insofar as the educational and missionary goals are concerned. Its overly Christian posture is suggestive of a masked justification of the civilising mission of the founders of NECE School. The continuing modernising drive, in such a vastly rural and poor context, resonates with – even in alignment with – related pro-poor agendas that assist, immensely, in enhancing credibility for eliciting donor support. Significantly, as a result of this globally-driven agenda, what are highlighted as strengths in the practice of ECCD, in NECE School, positively reflect outwardly to the developed world; while inwardly questions of relevance to local context still pervade, in the developing world.

10. What elements informed the development of Ghana’s early childhood care and development (ECCD) policy of 2004?

In consideration of the earlier RQs, within the NECE School case study, this question appears superfluous relative to the cumulative perceptions among stakeholders. The evidence ardently points to a need for – albeit a locally contextually conceived – early childhood education policy,

provision, and practice. In due regard of Yendi as a traditional, cultural and largely rural community, the high dependence on farming as a predominant vocation; the state of development of social facilities and amenities; and the conspicuously poverty-stricken circumstances of the population, there is no doubt of a manifestly disjunctive relationship between context of practice and the global phenomenon of ECCD. In many ways, there is a vicious cycle in this articulated relationship: the resource impotence that disables indigenous initiation of locally relevant educational practices, equally reproduce such disjunctive provisions, resulting in an ultimate dissatisfaction. An indigenous practice, were it to emerge, would be one that attunes itself to the meaningful life worlds of children and childhood; aiming as a result to engineer locally relevant change.

11. How does Ghana's local context and culture feature within current ECCD policy, provision and practice?

Current ECCD practice, as witnessed in the NECE School case study, reveal a cursory at times scant and vague, references to Ghanaian culture. In the overwhelming perception of ECCD as both new and a foreign import into the local context, it is within reason to presume that foundational basis would reflect the pre-existing local culture. The common understandings of culture (mother-tongue, history, folklore, festivals, dress, creativity, performativity, and behaviour), in the practical realities of ECCD at NECE School, merely found accommodation, when convenient. Understandably, the dominant use of English, as language even despite policy guidance; the continuing influences of globalisation disrupting cultural boundaries; and the socio-historical inferior status afflicted as a colonial legacy offer, and in some ways explain away, the lack of prioritisation of Ghanaian culture in ECCD policy, provision and practice. Furthermore, the conceptualisation of global ECCD: as a praxis with its own integrity and a universal good, as instantiated in NECE School engendered the purported disjunctions. As a praxis with composite integrity, there is a presumption of what a 'right' or good practice or ideal looks like. At the same time, by its global or universal posturing ECCD, as operationalised in NECE School, displayed wanton disregard of not just context, but propriety, appropriateness, and relevance. The case school showed a total preference for totalising global ideals; in its wilful abandonment of any local undercurrents that would have afforded ample meaning considering the context.

12. How influential are stakeholders on ECCD on matters of policy, provision and practice?

This RQ is perhaps the most contentious of all the questions. Stakeholders at the very local levels appeared to wield little leverage, if any, over policy, provision and practice. In the purported implication of the developed worlds in the early childhood education policy and practice in developing countries; it is the overly skewed influence in favour of the former that is at the core of the argument. In the NECE School case study, local stakeholders (parents, children, staff, management, local community, GES, and the Ministry of Education) appeared to be reacting and responding rather than determining the trajectories that ECCD policy, provision and practice assumed. On the flipside, global ECCD as a composite practice wielded both an integrity and the resources that both defined and nurtured the character of policy, provision and practice. Locally, there was a sense that ECCD was easily accepted – because ‘it’s there’; to borrow George Mallory’s retort. Thus, perhaps, explaining the nonchalance in perceptions among stakeholders – ‘it doesn’t matter if it is foreign’ or even ‘we have always borrowed from the developed countries’. The general perception, among stakeholders was that ECCD was largely foreign, in all essentials: in spite of this the unanimity of acceptance of ECCD into local practice is beyond question. There was therefore both the will – as seen in the receptive attitudes of local stakeholders, and the way – as depicted in the drive to globalise ECCD. On the voluntary–coercion conundrum, experience from NECE School exemplified a co-option of the two, leaving open the question: in whose interest are we providing ECCD?

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter was designed to analytically describe the two cases – GECE School and NECE School. As part of this rationale, the cases have been treated holistically as intrinsic cases to delineate their boundaries; while collectively addressing the particularities that contextualises each case. The application of the multiple case study design has assisted this study to benefit from the advantages presented with two cases, rather than one (Yin 2014). With this accomplished, the next chapter (Chapter Six), in synchronisation with the present chapter has synthesised both cases – in a cross-case analysis – to highlight crucial elements of the cases as a collective. The rationale

ultimately is to deepen the depth of analysis, as well as extending the reliability of a literal replication, of the first case in a second case.

Chapter Six

6.0 Cross-Case Synthesis and Discussion

This chapter is aimed at a synthesis of the two cases that have been analytically discussed in Chapter Five, following a multiple case study design. In this chapter, the analysed data – that is the evidence from the GECE School and NECE School cases – are brought together. In this respect, the study achieves both breadth and depth in the contextual analysis of the multiple case study; thus, enhancing the validity and reliability of the study. The meticulous adherence to dictates of what a good case study is: in the choice of two cases rather than a single case; in the triangulation of data sources; a traceable chain of evidence; and a case study protocol and data base; all collectively assisted the processes leading to the synthesised cases. This synthesis needs to be understood not as a comparative among cases, but as an extension of the case study; in the methodical replication of a first case in a second.

6.1.1 The GECE School Case Study

This is a case study of an early childhood education provider (0 – 8 years), within a school in Tamale, the Northern Region of Ghana. The study, which lasted for nearly two months, generated data from stakeholders among them children, parents, teaching staff, policy makers and funders of ECCD. The setting for this case study is characteristically urban: Tamale as the capital town of the region; has most government and private institutions (courts, security, police, military, banks, schools and airport among others) sited in the metropolis; and finally, the predominance of more public sector and private businesses creating a relatively cosmopolitan and a more affluent ambience, by the standards of the Region. Overall 23 participants took part in this case study: data generated through interviews, observation, documents, photographs, and a focus group discussion. With the methodology of case study driven by the research questions (RQs), the data were analysed gauging for clues that offered clarifications, understandings and

answers to those initial propositions contained in the RQs. Significantly, the GECE School case study provided some answers to the RQs posed. However, these answers are deemed partial (and thus incomplete) evidence, as the study followed a replication design. By this, the construct validity of the case study becomes sound on the complement of evidence from the second case study. It is worth stating that the narrow selection criteria set for cases, on the commencement of research in each case, broadened as the particular and germane features of the bounded cases emerged. This synthesis, therefore, offers a first opportunity for determination, comparison, cumulation, and clarification; in particular, on whether or not these two were similar or contrasting, cases in a multiple case study.

6.1.2 The NECE School Case Study

NECE School was a replication of the GECE School case study and therefore followed the same methods in design and data generation. The case study sought a similar context, to strengthen the construct validity (internal design) of the study; and to emphasise that findings were reliably replicable to, and possibly generalizable within similar contexts. Equally set in the Northern Region of Ghana, within the Yendi municipality, the NECE School case study provided a different experience to the Tamale case on some levels. NECE School turned out to be a deeply faith-based institution; heavily influenced and connected to foreign funding sources and influences. Not least of all these influences on NECE School was the very traditional and cultural outlook of (its setting in) the Yendi municipality. In this case study, the researcher spent similar approximate number of weeks to the first case (seven weeks), involving 20 participants (children, parents, teaching staff, senior management, and other key stakeholders). In comparison to GECE School, this case school offered certain nuances: the initial urban classification of both settings showed differences in character with immersion; and also, the depth and direction each case led, while complementary showed uniqueness on many fronts. Tamale is a metropolis with majority living in urban spaces; and Yendi though classified as a municipality (in political delimited administration) has a majority rural population (nearly 60%). NECE School itself is set within a village on the outskirts of Yendi. For instance, although Dagombas are the dominant tribe in both towns, regard to

the tradition and culture varied: with Yendi showing closer affinity relative to the more cosmopolitan Tamale metropolis. On the one hand, as bounded and specific units the context for each case provided clarity within its particular social reality. As a multiple case study, on the other hand, the two intrinsic cases illuminated – via an in-depth, and analytic, description of the cases and contexts – the unclear boundaries between context and phenomenon.

6.2 Cross-Case Comparison of GECE School and NECE School

According to Chris Ryan (2012), the cross-case analysis exercise entails iterative and reiterative processes that involve identification, compilation, categorisation, and labelling; with the objective to cumulate, compare, and contrast findings that, in certain instances, appear divergently diverse. The abiding aim is for such ‘comparison to produce an “accumulative knowledge” – but take due cognisance that as the knowledge becomes “accumulated” it becomes distanced from the subject matter of the study’ (Ryan 2012: 555). On his part, Yin (2014) advocates the use of word tables for this process, essentially grounding the effectiveness of qualitative analysis, rather than a limiting and foreclosing (in this context, inappropriate) numeric analysis tables. Ryan points out that, for a successful cross-case, and a good case study analysis for that matter: ‘the researcher is a tool of the research, and the expertise, perspicacity, empathy and experience of the researcher are just as important as any technical skill in textual or statistical analysis’ (Ryan 2012: 550). In this study, the long periods of immersion in the empirical data and in the settings for the case study, resulted in deep knowledge and enriched information about the contexts.

In the execution of this cross-case synthesis, as in the entire process of this case study, a series of value judgments have been made. Crucially such subjective issues have been aimed at staying within quality judgements of a good qualitative study. In this pursuit, the study adopted Ryan’s framework, to aid the synthesis of the case. The following series of questions serve as critical pointers:

- a) Are the locations selected sufficiently similar in terms of size, populations, stage of ... development and other characteristics?
- b) Are the paradigms of research similar across the different cases?
- c) Are the modes of data collection equivalent across the different cases?
- d) Are the questions set to respondents across the different cases equivalent?
- e) Are the modes of measurement the same across the different cases?
- f) Are the levels of expertise of the researchers equivalent across the different cases?
- g) To what extent are there similarities and differences between respondents and populations?
- h) Is there an equivalence of relevance?' (Ryan 2012: 554–555)

Reflections on the foregoing questions have guided the comparisons between the GECE School and the NECE School case studies. The striking elements are more in relation to the contexts – of Tamale and Yendi – that exude some peculiar characteristics often showing similarities with intermittent contrasts, in certain instances. For the case study in Yendi, the township while semi-urban, the municipality was diffusely rural in nature. While Tamale and Yendi were dominated by Dagombas, Yendi rather than Tamale (the Regional capital) was designated as the traditional and cultural capital of Dagbon. This difference is significant: by its deep immersion in the cultural domain and relics of the Dagbon kingdom, Yendi has suffered the fate of being depicted as ‘unmodern’ and often needing a civilising ‘influence’ or ‘upgrade’. On the other hand, Tamale has increasingly been seen as the more modern hub, probably coming third after the cities of Accra (the capital city of Ghana) and Kumasi (the Ashanti Regional capital). By its cosmopolitan character, it is dissimilar to Yendi; and enjoys the added privilege of hosting important government services, jobs and public facilities, among them local and international banks and the airport (gradually being transformed into an international airport). These defining characteristics of the settings of the case studies are crucial to understanding the essential resources that prevail in such contexts and therefore, ought to influence the nature and character of any educational programme and practice. Table 6.1 below illustrates the salient elements between the cases, using relevant (to each context) predetermined categories that are grounded in the empirical realities of the cases.

Categories (Predetermined)	GECE School Case Study	NECE School Case Study
The School	Private provision of basic school Preschool and Basic school – Primary 1 to 6 and JHS 1 to 3 Staff – few certified/SHS Leavers employed	Ditto
Location	Urban: Tamale Metropolis Catchment location: built-up and busy residential area; major public services – courts, police, regional administration offices	Semi-Urban (majority population Rural) Sited in schools district outside of Yendi – near villages Proximity to Yaa Naa's residence
Language	English language (L2) as language of instruction Dagbani language (L1) as mother-tongue – used episodically	Ditto
Learning Programme	Policy – Curriculum by the Ghana Education Service (GES) From Preschool through Basic Education Certificate Examination	Ditto
ECCD Provision	Preschool: below 3 in crèche Nursery: ages 3 and 4 Kindergarten (KG): ages 4–6	Ditto
Global influences	Global ECCD drive (UNICEF) Standardisation – subjects; assessments; child development ideas; school systems	Ditto Baptist Mission (US/Europe) Computers, Books, and bus from the US,
Government influences	ECCD Policy of 2004 Regulation – MOE; GES; Tamale Metro Assembly; ECCD Regional and Metro Coordinators; Department of Social Welfare; Curriculum guidance; Registration/Inspection	Ditto *Yendi Municipal Assembly Local traditional authority (Yaa Naa)
In-School Services (e.g. Transportation, food, health)	Parents Teacher Association (PTA). Transport: parents drop-off and pick-up on motorbikes and bicycles, No canteen service, just food and snack stalls on site: few children brought packed lunch	No PTA – Termly (ad hoc) Parent Teacher conference Canteen providing food for all children and staff School bus for all children

Table 6.1 Comparison of Case-by-Case Evidence

From the case-by-case comparison, it is clear in many ways that the case study, in zooming in on these individual instances, collectively offer significant meanings that represent what can conveniently be termed local ECCD exemplars. These exemplars essentially mirror, in a crude sense, the global templates that engineered practice within the local. As far as judgement about whether this show exactness, in match, in the global–local ECCD relationship, there are certainly unarguable similarities in features that are impossible to disclaim. On another plane, this gives traction to world systems theorists’ claim of global isomorphism, in the increasingly standardised ways educational practices and institutions are progressively constructed (Anderson-Levitt 2003). Even the most reflexive practitioner, in controlling for all bias and subjectivities, will not fail to be transfixed by the sameness of character and globality of content, when sat in a classroom in a developing world context (such as Yendi or Tamale in the Northern Ghana).

Table 6.2 below presents such global templates and local exemplars to illustrate the instances of uniformities that afflict global educational practice, essentially thereby stultifying local initiatives and culturally appropriate practice. The archetypes of ECCD practice, as gleaned from these cases in Tamale and Yendi, when viewed as outposts of global early childhood educational practice stand in accord with the postulates of world polity. Essentially, the universalisms associated with ECCD, in the ways that they were locally understood and applied offer an accentuated, even exaggerated visibility to the global agenda that early childhood education is.

Programmes	Policy	Provision	Practice
Global ECCD (the template)	<p>Aim for quality education through the phases (including early childhood) of life – e.g. EFA goals of UNESCO</p> <p>Education as a fundamental human right</p> <p>Global (centralised) macro-management of educational provision through monitoring globally</p> <p>Education as a key lever for development</p> <p>Single defined global educational agenda (UNESCO)</p> <p>Childhood is critical – use it or lose it (ages 0–8)</p> <p>Close teacher gap and achieve high quality staff in ECCE</p> <p>Aim for holistic policy effect on child development</p> <p>Evidence-based policy – theoretical and research basis</p>	<p>Mutual interdependence – we can export knowledge so others elsewhere benefit</p> <p>Problem-solving educational provision</p> <p>Education as a public good – rationales for provision</p> <p>Broad aspirations of a global community – sameness of provision to produce same results for all children</p> <p>Universal one-year pre-primary provision for all</p> <p>Both public and private sector</p> <p>Some government/public ECCD funding</p> <p>Typologies: Preschool, Kindergarten (KG), Nursery, Crèche, Reception (UK)</p>	<p>Culture and context seen as key to human development</p> <p>Global development agenda – doing things practically that improve people's condition</p> <p>Developmentally Appropriate Practice</p> <p>Teacher expertise in range of learning possibilities</p> <p>Child-centred and personalised learning</p> <p>Children to make progress in learning through the stages of schooling: Scaffolding by adult as an aid</p> <p>Curriculum is key to practice/Standardised subjects</p> <p>Sound assessment tools that check children's achievement of goals</p>
Local ECCD (Exemplars)	<p>Ghana's Constitution – Article 28 (Children)</p> <p>International obligation – UNCRC, UNICEF, EFA, and MDGs (Poverty reduction strategy)</p> <p>ECCD as 0 – 8 years age range</p> <p>Children's Act (1998) – Act 560</p> <p>Eliminate cultural abuses of children</p> <p>Mainstream ECCD into basic education</p>	<p>Provision by NGOs, communities, faith groups, public and private (majority are privately-owned)</p> <p>Fee-free tuition in preschool: 2 year KG</p> <p>Funding from government, parents, NGOs, religious groups, community</p> <p>ECCD provided as an investment in society's future</p> <p>Typologies: preschool (Crèche, Nursery and KG)</p>	<p>ECCD programmes as preparatory</p> <p>GES Curriculum</p> <p>Teacher-led didactic instruction method</p> <p>Assessment for progress on goals</p> <p>New practices specifically designated as ECCD – different to old KGs</p> <p>High child–teacher ratios</p> <p>Higher education pathways for teachers (UCEW)</p> <p>*DAP (as best practice) vs. CAP</p>

Table 6.2 of Global–Local ECCD Exemplars Comparison

*DAP – Developmentally Appropriate Practice

CAP – Contextually/Culturally

Appropriate Practice

Clearly evident from the above table (6.2) of ECCD global and local exemplars is the claim that the wholesome adoption of a template without the context creates a disarticulation. Such disjunctive issues result from among others; the ill-fitting of well-intentioned precepts and ideals such as UNCRC, EFA, MDGs/SDGs, DAP, and ECCD generally into the developing world context. From the two cases in Yendi and Tamale the data on observation, interviews, and FGs all converge on one claim: global policy, provision and practice on ECCD appear incongruous in contexts that lack the privileged undercurrents for such praxis.

6.2.1 Thematic Analysis of the Case Study Data

Thus far, the analysis has proceeded with an intent on ‘accurate representation’ (Ryan 2012: 555) of the issues and the phenomenon under study. It is worthy of note however, that the inherent uncertainties over judgements are in themselves reflective of the incoherence and uncertainties typical of social reality. In doing this cross-case analysis, the concreteness and complexities of the contexts have emerged; demonstrating improved knowledge and understandings. The new understandings – contingent on the hitherto contextual realities of each case – reflect in the emergent themes, as shown on Table 6.3 below.

Research Questions	Themes
1. How implicated is the developed world in the early child education policy, provision and practice in the developing world?	Early childhood Care and Development as a Global Phenomenon
2. How is global early childhood education perceived within the local context of Ghana?	Status Connotations in Childhood Geographical Positioning and Understandings
3. What are the characteristics of the global–local dynamics on the policy, provision and practice of early childhood education?	Developed World – Developing World Epistemic Interactions
4. What elements informed the development of Ghana’s early childhood care and development (ECCD) policy of 2004?	Mis/Understandings of the role of education: Localised meanings of a global phenomenon
5. How does Ghana’s local context and culture feature within current ECCD policy, provision and practice?	Indigenous Conceptions of knowledge, childhood, and the world
6. How relevant are stakeholders on ECCD on matters of policy, provision and practice?	Early childhood Care and Development as a Global Phenomenon

Table 6.3 Matrix of Research Questions-Themes-Combined Themes

The centrality of the RQs (the left end of Table 6.3), yet again, has been highlighted in its continual iteration with the entire process of the research. The earlier categorised emergent themes (from the case studies) – hinge and instantiate the contingencies that – are now reclassified as the new themes. The relational elements of the RQs to the themes, stem from the initial emphases that spawned the case study research methodology resulting in the data that have been analysed, reductively, into the themes. Ryan insists that ‘any comparison requires classifications against which checks can be made. Certainly, comparisons between case studies are made’ (Ryan 2012: 554). To this end, the foregoing therefore illustrates a framework for the exploration of the two cases together: now as a case

study of early childhood care and development. The new constructions exude thematic issues that need conflation as a multiple case study; to avoid the misperception of the cases as separate case studies. The combined themes highlighted on the matrix above, show clarity in its presentation of a chain of processes that meet the requisite audit trail, to allow for successful ‘checks’ to be made.

6.2.2 Synthesis of Data from the Multiple Case Study (the two cases)

An initial process of the cross-case synthesis has involved a further negotiation and distilling of new themes from the earlier thematic analysis as well as from the research questions. These have expanded the categories, arising out of the attempt to ground the analysis within the wider expanse of the empirical and theoretical evidence. This is important insofar as attempts are made not to misrepresent or underrepresent context. Beyond this process, the study thenceforth becomes whole; with references now made to the case study – as implying the multiple case study – and not the individual cases (as identified previously as GECE School and NECE School). With an attempt made to synthesise the data, it is imperative that the expansions due to the breadth gained from the analyses of the two cases is highlighted. These expansions in the thematic categories is to keep fidelity with the data. Still, associations are made with the existing themes to achieve convergence on the analyses.

1. ECCD Global Conceptualisation
2. Childhoods across the Globe
3. Global disjunctions in ECCD
4. Power Relations on Knowledges
5. Global–Local Epistemic Transactions
6. Learning Experiences across cultures
7. Socio-historical undercurrents to ECCD
Policy, Provision and Practice
8. Culturally Appropriate Policy, Provision
and Practice
9. Indigenous knowledge construction
10. Cross-cultural approaches to ECCD
11. Hierarchies of influence among ECCD
stakeholders
12. Hegemonic global discourses

Combined Themes (for Analysis)	Expanded Themes (from Cross-Case Synthesis)
<i>Early childhood Care and Development as a Global Phenomenon</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECCD Global Conceptualisation • Childhoods across the Globe
<i>Developed World – Developing World Epistemic Interactions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power Relations on Knowledges • Global – Local Epistemic Transactions • Hegemonic discourses
<i>Status Connotations in Childhood Geographical Positioning and Understandings</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Disjunctions in ECCD • Hierarchies of Influence among ECCD Stakeholders
<i>Indigenous Conceptions of knowledge, childhood, and the world</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-cultural undercurrents to ECCD Policy, Provision and Practice • Learning Experiences across cultures • Indigenous Knowledge Construction
<i>Mis/Understandings of the role of education: Localised meanings of a global phenomenon</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-cultural approaches to ECCD • Culturally Appropriate Policy, Provision and Practice

Table 6.3 (1) Themes for the Analysis

From Table 6.3 (1) an attempt is made to reduce the themes, as discussed below – in its expanded categorization. The reductive process is to reflect the commonalities prevalent in the issues deduced from the data. The study at the synthesis level however, has proceeded with a discussion of the expanded categories to add depth to the issues analysed.

Robert Yin (2014) considers cross-case analyses as suitable to multiple case study designs, such as this study. Further, he advocates that for strong analysis of cases, the study ought ‘to develop strong, plausible, and fair arguments that are supported by the data’ (Yin 2014: 167). In the light of this, the cross-case synthesis considers the force of analysis as integral, rather than strict comparisons, to achieving the aim of the case study – in a valid, trustworthy, and reliable manner. Therefore, the admonition of Kieran Egan (2002: 185) that sheer ‘research will not give answers to the questions we ask; analysis is what is needed’ is central to the analytical stance adopted in this synthesis of the cases.

6.3 Cross-Case Thematic Analysis

The following section deals with the thematic analysis of the emergent categories from the comparisons of the cases in this case study. In terms of approach (and scope) each theme will constitute a synthesis of the evidence from the respective cases, as well as an examination of such evidence through the lens of other studies and the theoretical literature – still aiming for contextually framed understandings. As an interpretive case study, it is an imperative to consider other worldviews – beyond the immediate philosophical and empirical gaze of the researcher – effectively progressing the study to conceptual intelligibility yet still grounded in contextual relevance. Ryan (2012: 555) has posited that while accurate representation is key; an interpretive validity is equally essential for the potential utility value of the case study research. Stating emphatically that an:

additional test of research is not only the credibility it has for the researcher and the researched, but also subsequent users of the research...an implicit move from the issues of “accurate representation” of the phenomenon being studied to one of interpretative validity.

6.3.1 ECCD Global Conceptualisation

The evidence from the descriptive cases point to particular conceptualisations of early childhood care and development (ECCD): local practices driven farther by globally situated views and

conceptions. In both GECE School and NECE School, stakeholders constructed ECCD as a new phenomenon; widely accepted as foreign to the Ghanaian context. Understood as a vantage point to gauge the practice of the global phenomenon, the case study reveals a lot about the context of ECCD services; poignantly, its non-existence in any other realms of society besides schools. Stakeholder perceptions that the ‘holistic development’ of the child only materialised within school settings reveal a standardised, universalised academic and ‘scholarized’ rootedness; achieved through the structural (centralised) location of children and childhood. This, while interesting, is a significantly limited and partial construction of ECCD, locally; as early childhood development (as conceived globally) encompasses the realms of ‘education’, ‘care’, and ‘health and welfare’ – given meaning to the ‘holistic’ conception prevalent in the global south (Penn 2010: 50). In NECE School as in GECE School substance was given to ‘holistic child development’ – in tandem with the global tropes – as an emphatic justification of the relevance of ECCD, in the Ghanaian context. Most ECCD documents analysed contained such phrases, with roots in the universal messages from the World Bank (WB) and United Nations agencies (UNICEF and UNESCO amongst them). As highlighted, in the NECE School case study, its tendency to intensively govern children – aiming to achieve a certain vision – of childhood engineered and reproduced contradictions in the natural life worlds of the children.

Notwithstanding these local understandings, globally too, there are myriad contradictions: the unclear definition of ECCD for example; the haphazard setting of age of enrolment into schooling; coupled with the rationale for and ECCD limitation to preschool, is problematic. Consequently, various formulations have followed contextual imperatives: the generality of which depict preschool as not ‘real school’, ‘free and playful’ and not normal school; others portend a ‘preparatory’ rationale, with academic skills often emphasised (Broström 2006: 54). Such contradictory positions engender a certain ambivalence in global ECCD conceptualisation. However, conceived, the tendency to experiment with a crucial first encounter for children, with a world external to the family setting is unsettling. While children may skilfully display ‘a positive emotional attitude’ to the rapid transition (Kienig 2006: 30), the resultant disempowering lack of ‘choice’ and ‘control’ ultimately define an unhealthy learning and educational trajectory (Fortune-Wood 2006: 137). The two cases studied revealed fleeting rationales for provision, arising out of the seeming ‘provisioned’ conscriptions into schooling; in some cases exposure to such environments exceeding the ‘developmental needs and capabilities’ of younger children (Kienig 2006: 34). This claim is backed up by observations within contexts: on both the mundane social exposures as well as to the (very content of) academic emphasis of preschool provision.

The universalisms entailed in the understanding of ECCD reflect in the sorts of policy, provision and practice that define the ECCD landscape in Ghana. The cases studied revealed an attitude typical of exotic treatment of early childhood education. For children, such novelty is supported by the view in socialisation theory that exposure to schooling, offered an escape from the ‘particularistic features of family life’ (Wyness 2012: 172). In both settings, participants and stakeholders while very confident, and fluid, in the analysis of general educational practice, would often express a certain reticence and limitation (in talking) about the nature of ECCD provision, in particular. For instance, in the attempt to understand the pegging of the age of enrolment, both case studies in unanimity evinced the haphazard trends across the globe: ubiquitously asserting that Ghana was merely backing the trend, globally. In all the plenitude of perceptions, no exception emerged on whether there was a local capacity to generate local educational practice, with regard to contextual relevance. Moreover, the estrangement (as with the newness) of ECCD garnered from the perceptions of stakeholders, both deflects from local culpability as well as grants early childhood a privileged conception and place in the local context. One such privileging is the presumptive equation of ECCD to a poverty alleviation strategy: a problematic justification yet internalised within the local domains of practice.

In furtherance, by these failures, the case study brings into sharp scrutiny local incapacity to contextualise conceptualisations of childhood: one that makes the world ‘available for the child’ yet at the same time make the ‘child available for the world’ (Broström 2001: 160). In side-lining such a contextual vision of ECCD, practice in northern Ghana has at best heralded new inequalities. ECCD provision, exemplified in GECE and NECE School, constitute the newly added primary frontier to a continual widening gap, among children. For most children, in Tamale and more especially Yendi, the mere fact of such a provision defines their exclusion, and future trajectory: to wander, forage, free-range and abandoned to the mercies of (other-than schooling) alternative provision. ECCD when locally conceived, would situate praxis within ‘such societal risks and possibilities’ for all children: even while it may ‘set education new and big problems and tasks’ (Klafki 1994 cited in Broström 2001: 160). It does appear that these are the sorts of challenges education authorities in Ghana conveniently avoided; in the framing of the 2004 ECCD policy. The abdication of opportunities to contextually infuse culturally appropriate content in a global phenomenon exemplifies such incapacity; consequentially heralding disjunctions.

6.3.2 Childhoods across the Globe

In the case studies, within both settings in Tamale and Yendi, no striking particular conceptualisation of childhood emerged, with consideration of local imperatives. Of course, in the immersions within the respective settings, a sense was gained of elements that typified, uniquely, childhoods that veered from the universal particular ‘childhood’ sought in attempts to globalise early childhood education. In the first case study, the urban and cosmopolitan character of Tamale portrayed childhoods that appeared set in similitude to globally influenced constructions. The Tamale case reflected global influences from technology and globalisation (media, games, television, toys and fashion), and the wide prevalence – implied gradual distancing from indigenous culture and tradition – of other cultures with significant Western European influences. The replication study appeared different: markedly steeped in tradition and culture and deep affinities with kith and kin reflective of childhoods that retain characteristics germane to its socio-genetic origins. This is important because the shaving off of such elements critical to identifying the uniqueness of various childhoods, depending on place and time, such as socio-historical contextual considerations have bedevilled indigenous conceptualisations of childhoods.

In terms of underpinnings to policy, provision and practice, the cases showed avid subscription to (discredited notions of) universalism and developmentalism; crudely as a ‘regime of truth’ (Moss 2001: 93). An approach antithetical to the local social realities; of diffuse childhood experiences – often risk prone rather than averse and overscheduled (Levey 2009 cited in Wyness 2012: 210). Structurally, some children are simply not located centrally in schools; some children combine work and school; and yet some children just remain unaccounted for. In this rendition of childhoods, akin to the northern Ghana case, there are perhaps no choices and no alternatives. The ‘immediacy of gratification’ of essential ‘material circumstances and traditional values’ leave children without an ‘either’ ‘or’ scenario: assumed in the global ‘prioritisation of school over labour’ (Wyness 2012: 274). As a matter of fact, deferred gratification in the choice of schooling – as a root to actualise and ‘become’ – is a luxury that ‘being’, in the here and now, ostensibly does not allow under such dire circumstances (Wyness 2012; Twum-Danso 2009; Penn 2005).

There is no shortage of research, providing evidence that supports the sterilisation, even pathologising of indigenous childhoods. And in their place an increasingly standardised view of childhood; with common references to the global child (Nsamenang & Tchombe 2008;

CODESRIA 2009; Twum-Danso & Ame 2012). A meta-study of child research in Africa revealed that the expressive attempts to vocalise an indigenous worldview were often obfuscated: funding, global platforms and international agencies with clout, tend to walk in sync with the all-too-familiar ‘problematising’ of vulnerabilities, sickness, abnormalities, poverty and other disadvantages. Rarely are studies intent on normalising, the contextual realities (rather deemed abnormal and problematic), mainstreamed and accepted globally (CODESRIA 2009). In the case study settings, it was uncharacteristic to sight displays of local indigenous symbols: normal and common however, in both cases were examples of Western European and North American cultural symbols that contextually defined childhoods. In schools, children showed familiarity with super-hero characters from Western and other global influences (Iron Man, Super Mario, Spider man, Pokémon): even some exercise books had such characters customised as their covering. Other global influences such as television programmes and the array of modern media – even cited by teaching staff in lessons – reflected an ever-distancing, even alienation, from the contexts that had familiarity and meaning for children.

In a global North–global South comparative, it is within rationality to surmise that the sorts of socio-historical and theoretical ferment that drove and solidified conceptualisations of childhood has eluded the global South, and in this specific instance, Ghana. The socio-historical narrative of Europe, for example, illustrate a progressive account and dynamic trend overtime (from the 1500s to date). From the rudimentary views of middle-class indulgence and privileging, through stage of life conceptions, the cognitive ‘tabula rasa’ of John Locke, and Rousseau’s romanticised notions, to the now accepted right-based entitlements; collectively becoming mainstreamed on a global scale (Pound 2011; Pollock 1983; Stone 1977; Fletcher & Hussey 1999). Lawrence Stone’s study – *‘The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500–1800’* (1977) – reveal such a particularistic and contextual historical narrative account of progressive changes in the conceptions of children and childhood. The critical lack of such a historically recorded narrative account to evidentially underpin ECCD policy and provision locally, cause disarticulations. Especially added to the complexity are the attempts to undergird local practice with justifications from such Western-based narratives.

In consideration of the foregoing, even in the face of such rich socio-historical and cultural undercurrents to practice, diversity still remains a practical feature of ECCD in some developed nations. The Danish laissez faire approach, even its non-educational conception of ECCD is a

clear instance. The New Zealand Te Whariki, the English Early Years and Foundation Stage, as well as the Italian Reggio Emilia constructions, offer such divergent conceptions; while commonalities may prevail in their respective histories. Instead of conformity to a global gold standard – children’s self-development, self-activity, and child orientation – take a contextual centre-stage (Broström 2001: 155). Comparatively, the Ghanaian case in inexpediently adopting totalising well-established theories as opposed to context-oriented practices, have ended up with discontinuities and disconnects between ECCD phenomenon and practice within the local context. In praise of such context-based ECCD programmes, Yanez and Yanez (2001: 49–53) cite the Venezuelan ‘Quality Integral Preschools’ (PIC): community provision of public ECCD programme with each PIC truly unique to its community. By grounding practice in the contextual and situational realities (of Venezuela), stability was achieved in a context prone to high instability associated with public administration. In the Venezuelan example, the usual consequence of disjointed policies blamed on ‘institutional memory’ loss is resolved by local ownership of programmes. In its adoption of an ECCD programme, similar such opportunities have been squandered in the Ghanaian case, in not conceptualising a domestic vision of childhood, to guide the framing of such a policy. The result are the incongruities observed in the case study; in the natural practice of ECCD in GECE School and NECE School.

6.3.3 Global disjunctions in ECCD

In the conduct of the case study in the two schools, an embedded objective was to highlight disjunctions that presented when attempts were made to practice global ECCD, with little regard to its contextual relevance. Disjunctions ubiquitously identified with both contexts were among others: partial application of globally conceived ideals of ECCD; displacement of local socio-cultural and historical realities; an alternative praxis reflected in learning programmes and opportunities for children; alienated children and childhoods; mimicking and imitation rather than authentic and generative educational programme; and eclipsed indigenous knowledges driving preference for global templates and products. In the view of this study, the cases have unearthed and unravelled issues bordering on the tenability of ECCD in the developing world context, such as Northern Ghana. In GECE School, the aspirations of the school and its educational programme forged a sense of belongingness elsewhere other than Tamale, when juxtaposed to the realities of the location and locale of the school, in the Northern Region. The NECE School case study on the other hand, displayed an ill-fit – a modern Christian school – in disregard to local tradition,

culture, and histories that defined and offered meaning to the children who inhabited the school. It was almost as if what mattered – school in this scenario – could be divorced from the social reality of children: in the end the children still returned home to that reality. Philip Gammage (1991: 40) warns of the ‘danger in seeing curricular as somehow fashioned outside of the children’. In both GECE School and NECE School, had consideration been given to children’s context and their childhoods; learning programmes would consequentially reflect differently.

Along similar lines, Viruru (2001: 19) point to the inherently disjunctive character of ECCD, as globalised: ‘so much of ECEC is written in the language of affluence and privilege and is far removed from the realities of so many children’. In the conduct of the case study, the ‘catalogue of suffering’ that is the familiar social reality of the Ghanaian northern child reflect inequalities that escape the comprehensibility of such well-touted and well-intentioned global programmes (Penn 2010: 292). In fact, precepts such as DAP, developmentalism, human (child) rights, and early childhood education naturally ill-fit and are often contextually meaningless. Equally, there are powerful international consorts that advance such globalist Western-driven agendas namely: UNESCO, UNICEF, USAID, WB, IMF, Plan International (PI), Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), Save the Children Foundation (SCF), Christian Children’s Fund of Canada (CCF), the EU, and the US, among others. Characteristic of ECCD provision in Ghana, and Africa generally, it will be a strange existence to live in the developing world and not to have encountered the force of these international agencies. In Ghana, these are affectionately called the ‘Development Partners’. With a perspectival lens, this characteristic Western dominance of global practice; in addition to an agenda to universalise certain precepts and conceptualisations – of ECCD, children, and childhood – naturally create incongruent relations, in the encounter between the global and the local. In the Ghanaian case, the very existence of provision, as argued has exacerbated already existing inequalities – fomenting ‘Unequal Childhood’ to borrow Helen Penn’s (2005) analysis of young children’s lives in resource-poor communities. All these, in addition to the distortions and resultant disadvantages that exposure to global ECCD has entailed, in the northern region.

6.3.4 Power Relations on Knowledges

The case studies of GECE School and NECE School, both within the developing world context, showed monumental capitulations in the tendencies to look outwardly, even existentially upwardly

to the developed worlds, on educational practice. This is explicable at two levels: firstly, the overwhelming perception of ECCD as an importation (of a global product) embodies a deference to a praxis with its composite integrity; and secondly, a pre-existing ‘colonising structure’ (Mudimbe 1988 cited in Connell 2007: 215) implied an increasing predisposition to integrate knowledges. The main instances of such pre-existing structure included: the use of the English Language, standardised subjects and teaching practice, as well as the overtly Christian ethos (as overtly articulated in the NECE case study, in particular). Insofar as ECCD was concerned, the cases studied on both counts showed an alacrity to localise global practices, even if no indigenous relevance justified their adoption. Knowledge, articulated in terms of ECCD practice itself, the content and programmes of learning, the theoretical and philosophical justifications, and general educational understandings in relation to policy, provision and practice: all had their underpinnings not locally, but in the developed world.

There is no doubting the hegemonic tendencies reflected in the sorts of knowledges deemed relevant globally. The caveats entailed in the production and dissemination of knowledges among them: claims of scientific, truth, and what works, all inherently inhabit a particular worldview. So whose reality counts (Robert Chambers 1997)? With most ‘frameworks and knowledge’ continually originating in the developed world, the tension between ‘received truth’ and ‘local knowledge’ remain an enduring characteristic of the global–local knowledge relations.

6.3.5 Global–Local Epistemic Transactions

In doing the case study, an abiding view that emerged from the data in both cases, often surprisingly, was the suggestion that ECCD was not a contradiction in local contexts. The apparent continuing altercation between the global and the local simply reflected a transactional relationship and interconnectivity – among diverse, if divergent knowledges. Viewed in such terms, there is a reasoned and appropriated parity among the different realms, as conveyed in interview data: ‘we learn from each other; although they will not tell us that they have learnt from us’; also ‘if they had not created education, we would have done it ourselves...we adopt theirs because there is no need to reinvent the wheel’ (GES Officer). In other respects, stakeholders in both case studies, articulated human capital arguments – with particular emphasis on the future pay-offs of ECCD. This argument fits in with the global desire for a skilled workforce, as well as reduction in poverty (Penn 2010; Garcia et al. 2008). The surprising elements, as the contradiction, lie not in these

justifications but in the very sources utilised: local practice with global facts of culture. Moreover, any notion of parity arising out of the epistemic transaction not only misunderstands the relationship but also is unsupported by the theoretical literature. This is because the majority of research, knowledge production, producers and dissemination (globally) originate from developed world sources mainly Europe and the United States (Connell 2007; Pence & Hix-Small 2009; Penn 2010). According to Pence and Hix-Small (2009: 76):

While 90% of the world's children live in the Majority World, over 90% of the published child development literature comes from the Minority World. Minority World images and understandings dominate early years' discussions internationally.

Barnhardt and Kawagley (2008: 227–238) in their study of the Caribon hunters (the Yupiaq people of Alaska) evidenced the 'distorted' and 'inaccurate' view of the outside world: a double jeopardy arising out of an enforced Western learning regime on an indigenous community. The emotions of grief, loss, guilt, hurt, and unmet aspirations reflect the complexities and challenges that present in the encounter among such seeming divergent worldviews is hardly reflective of a transactional relationship, in the view of this study. Ray Barnhardt (2002) in the *Domestication of the Ivory Tower* highlight as a consequence, the lamentable incongruities that becloud the relationship between the Western and the indigenous; in respect of institutions, structures, principles, spirituality, and cultural forms. Such incongruities (and disjunctions) prevailed in the case study settings, in Northern Ghana. Commonly, stakeholders articulated one cultural vision, yet battled with a different phenomenon, in practice: 'our culture is who we are...we need to teach the children our culture' yet 'ECCD is more foreign than local...the language, the toys, even education and religion itself' (GECE School Staff Focus Group).

6.3.6 Learning Experiences across Cultures

A common question was whether ECCD in the Ghanaian context needed to consider local indigenous cultures as part of the learning repertoire of children. Both case studies were set within the North of Ghana, nationally acclaimed to revel in the richness of their tradition and culture (dress, food, music, language and historical heritage and landmarks). However, in Tamale as in Yendi (the traditional capital of the majority Dagomba ethnic group), there was the loud presence

of the absence of the socio-historical meaning-making systems infused into the learning experiences of children. Even stranger, is the fact that as private schools and particularly for ECCD, variation in emphasis on content of learning was a given latitude that was never exercised. The token equation of cultural input – via infrequent references to the mother-tongue – was equally a missed opportunity, as children suffered the deluge of exposure to experiences that neither reflected their immediate social reality nor aspirationally realistic. The supplanting of ECCD onto an existing unquestioned, and unexamined educational system, perhaps foreclosed the fundamental question of what education was for, in local developing world contexts such as Yendi and Tamale, in the Northern Region of Ghana.

Moreover, with a Western missionary zeal to globalise their essential (yet narrow) context-free experiences; it is not surprising the prevalent attempts at rationalising ‘cultural difference’ intended to accommodate such ‘universalistic, individualistic notions of the child’ (Penn 2001: 297). In this respect, the assumption is that early childhood education, as education, is a universal good: and all that is required in other-than Western cultures is a liberal ‘nod to socio-cultural context’ (Penn 2001: 304). Furthermore, Penn cites a training of care-givers, in a Zimbabwean case study of farm workers and their children: which ‘consisted of a very short and garbled account of “ages and stages”...imitations of expensive Western plastic toys...deemed necessary to the children’s development’. What was lacking, as in the Ghanaian case study, was a nuance to the relativized culture and universalised behaviours. Because significantly, however rationalised behaviours such as learning only find meaning and explication within given cultural practices and social milieu (Penn 2001).

6.3.7 Socio-historical undercurrents to ECCD Policy, Provision and Practice

The evidence from both cases in this study jointly showed cognisance of the imperative of grounding early childhood education policy, provision and practice within the domain of the local (indigenous) socio-historical contexts. With such underpinnings, the purported disjunctions that emerged from an otherwise conceived practice, would be avoidable. In GECE School, as much as in NECE School, stakeholders incessantly drew on referents from farther outwith the contexts as constituting the justifications for their local ECCD provision and practice. For early childhood education, the attempts to conceptualise it as new, equally reveal a coincidental (causative) relationship between the international ferments that defined global ECCD and the local

movements and action in alignment with other nations, globally. Ghana's ECCD policy was virtually dormant till the inception of the Dakar EFA Framework and the MDGs (UN 2000). A similar observation has been made by researchers on children about national policies on children, post the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 (Twum-Danso & Ame 2012; Twum-Danso 2011; 2012). Other researchers have been scathing, insinuating capitulation to the UNICEF, for example, in allowing the organisation to determine the trajectory of local consultations, which eventually led to the Government of Ghana ECCD Policy of 2004. It is not surprising therefore, that provision has lacked a locally-engineered framework, resulting in apparent discontinuities between policy and provision. Examples abound in the predominant private sector dominance, with disparate emphasis on what is relevant to children; as well as the haphazard content delivered in the practice of ECCD, as instantiated in the case schools. Such incongruities result dually in the fleeting justifications, and the apparent confounded praxis, seen in the cases studied.

Further on confounding praxis arising out of ill-conceived undercurrents to policy and provision, the case studies unearthed multiplicities in the identities of childhoods. In the Yendi case study of NECE School, as in GECE School in Tamale, analytically children in those schools did not typify northern childhood. In a convoluted sense, they harboured the contradictory global North–global South/rich South–poor North (Ghanaian) malaise, as conceptualised earlier in this study. By these gradations in ontological positioning of these children (in both GECE and NECE) schooling becomes yet another privileged platform (albeit with frequent reversions to social reality) – with intermittent inclusion and exclusion. This is particularly so, as early childhood education relative to primary schooling comes at a cost to the parents. Such locally privileged childhoods live in a certain duality: in meeting the indicative statistic of (globally-defined) affluence yet living in a poor developing country (a developed world child in a developing world ECCD setting). This duality experienced by some children further complicate any notion of direct categorisation within the stark binaries of majority/developing world and minority/developed world.

6.3.8 Culturally Appropriate Policy, Provision and Practice

As articulated copiously in this thesis, an educational provision ought to consider its contextual fit and relevance. This argument is borne out of empirical evidence that when ECCD are conceived outwith the cultural context of Ghana, the result profoundly show in the disjunctive alignment to

local socio-historical realities. In both case studies, stakeholder attitudes to policy, provision and practice were gratuitously nonchalant: ‘everything is borrowed...even the English we speak, the clothes we wear...but it doesn’t matter’. A proprietor in a case school in an interview discounted the use of even the mother-tongue to instruct in the early years: ‘our local language only takes us so far’. At the heart of this rejection of, and indigenous antithetical relationship to, local culture are crucial contemporary complexities, and contradictions within education, and early childhood education for that matter. Locally as well, education is viewed in benign terms; the problem arises in the contextual fit of global knowledge in an indigenous setting. Globally too, two contradictory movements explain this phenomenon according to Taguchi (2010: 6–8): ‘complexity and diversity increase’ and ‘complexity diversity reduction’. The former highlights increasing complexity, diversity, multiplicity, inclusion and increasing provision to support women’s labour requirements. The latter is characterised by ‘complexity reduction’ by constraining policy and practice, standardisation and mainstreaming (such as developmentally appropriate practice).

The difficulties in proffering culturally appropriate policy, provision and practice, therefore, find meaning not in the indigenous rejection of local cultures but the prevalent countervailing forces. Effectively, the same undercurrents that define the essential elements and constitution of global ECCD. For instance, the age-segregation of children which is naturally conflictual with the mix-age gregarious activities of children in northern Ghana. In the end stakeholder attitudes reflect a question of how much to integrate and assimilate; rather than what to contextualise appropriately in the adoption of a foreign educational practice (ECCD), in the first instance. Thus, conveying contextual relevance to ECCD policy provision and practice: which ought to be linked to a specific time and a particular society. Because ultimately ‘practice could only be judged in terms of the best that was locally available’ when seeking a culturally appropriate practice (Woodhead 1996 cited in Penn 2001: 298).

In the case studies in the northern region of Ghana, the demographics and social realities pointed to many possibilities that could engineer a locally relevant and contextually appropriate ECCD programme. It is apparent that what was required was decisiveness and responsibility for choices – as Carlina Rinaldi (cited in Moss 2001: 80) admonishes. Perhaps, one exception to this *carte blanche* to policy makers, is the often misleading tangent and ultimately unfulfilling constructions of ECCD, as a ticket out of poverty; as well as its power to negate other childhood inequalities (Penn 2001; 2010; Boyden & Bourdillon 2000). In furtherance, lack of leverage in the local

constructions of childhood means that practice is not easily harnessed to the situational and contextual reality of children in northern Ghana. The globality of what exists arise from Western conceptualisations of children and childhood. Incidentally the same out-of-context conceptualisations that featured prominently in the rationales for ECCD practice in Ghana.

6.3.9 Indigenous knowledge construction

In the conduct of the case study, the NECE School case in the estimation of this research offered interesting glimpses of what potential indigenous knowledges and wisdom could nourish ECCD practice. The traditional and cultural richness of the Yendi municipality and its rural agricultural subsistence amplified opportunities for familial learning experiences for children. This is not conceived out of the vacuum; the children and their childhoods have their identities rooted in such context and culture. Learning from, about and within such familial authentic ‘real-life’ rather than mimicked versions, is what this study classifies as indigenous constructions of knowledge. Barnhardt and Kawagley (2008) refer to other-than academic but real-life survival competent praxis; most researchers are in agreement with the rootedness of learning within the social realities of children (Branco 2009; Barnhardt & Kawagley 2008; Twum-Danso and Ame 2012; Woodhead 1996). Meyer Fortes’ (2008) ethnographic research among the Talensi of northern Ghana reports the conflation of the social and the academic, in the daily lived realities of children. For relevant knowledges and education; a new praxis one of sociogenic standings tied to children’s experience and contexts are critical to developing world contexts such as northern Ghana. As seen from the experience of the case study, Ghanaian, as northern childhoods are diverse; with layers and gradations of meaning-making systems.

Furthermore, in most Western nations it is unarguable that conceptions of children’s status largely converge at the centralised realms of children’s ‘structural location’, ‘social status’, and ‘school status’ (Wyness 2012: 152). Michael Wyness (2012) offers an explication of the assemblage of constructs – mass compulsory schooling, defined social and temporal space, a curriculum, a classroom, with parents as a reference point – occasioned by such status connotation. As indicated already, in northern Ghana children lacked such privileged conceptualisation. Expectantly, their diverse as their challenging childhood experiences imply that such a centralised structural accountable framework is an uncommon, even an unnatural feature of Ghanaian childhood.

Therefore, ECCD as an educational framework in its application to these contexts has been found wanting.

The foregoing are contentious and often conflictual: ‘There is still strong support for an image of childhood manifest as global diversity, yet at the same time, the power of a much more singular and uniform image of a “global child” is stronger than it has ever been in the past’ (Pence & Hix-Small 2009: 86). As most indigenous knowledges are deemed backward garnered from local attitudes toward embracing the use of such wisdom; it is increasingly the character of ECCD practice in the developing world to alienate children from their social reality; while exposing them to knowledges from contexts beyond their meaningful grasp. In a published government policy document on education it states: ‘In Ghana, education policies do not and have never discriminated against any section of the community...However, cultural beliefs and practices...have hindered the participation of girls and women in formal education’ (GoG National Report 2009: 12). Significantly though in the case schools, there were examples of cultural influences on children: their festivals, dress-code, and mother-tongue, which when seen in a positive rather than negative light, could inform and richly enhance the indigenous content of ECCD practice. The whole point of education, and ECCD for that matter, lie not in ‘pre-programmed patterns’ portending same ‘developmental pathways’ as much as knowledge and learning tempered by socio-cultural, biological and ecological contexts of the children (Raban 2001: 172–175).

6.3.10 Cross-cultural approaches to ECCD

The stance of this study has been its inclination to hybridity: a wholeness approach to the fusion, production and utilisation of knowledge. The global–local binary, as early childhood education, portends multiplicity and diversity of approaches: a stance which renders attempts to uniformity, conformity and adherence to a single approach unworkable. Even on the presumption of a global template, the local exemplars that signify local operations of ECCD insinuate varied trends across contexts, as evidenced in the case schools. Equally implicated in this cross-cultural approach is the choice of the case study methodology: by seeking to catch glimpses of global phenomena taking vantage posts within local contexts, there is an understanding *pronto* of cross-cultural effects. In the GECE School case study, local stakeholders perceived their role in complementarity with global stakeholders: ‘we live in a global village’; ‘we teach the children in English in addition to the

Dagbani language so that they can fit in wherever they go'; and funding sources for ECCD policy, provision and practice. This appeared to be the intent of government policy gathering from the wording of the document. Similarly, NECE School accentuated these partnerships across cultures: pointing to 'influences' of the missionary work (in provisioning the school) and 'holistic development of the child'. In many ways, it is uncertain to whose advantage are these cross-cultural threads: as locally, the instances sited have sought to prop up faltering justifications of ECCD practice. On the global front, on the other hand, crucial 'after-thoughts' and re-thinking are afoot to redress approaches that have often felt colonial and anti-context: thereby allowing the 'polyphonic nature of ECCD' to be expressed (Pence & Hix-Small 2009: 79). Barnhardt and Kawagley (2008: 234) describe the dichotomy between Western-induced knowledges and indigenous understandings thus:

Western education tends to emphasize compartmentalised knowledge that is often decontextualized and taught in the detached setting of the classroom or laboratory. Indigenous people have traditionally acquired their knowledge through direct experience in the natural world.

It is such diversity, as highlighted in the literature review that allows space for the plethora of possibilities; signalling other ways of understanding, contextually. In New Zealand – the *Te Whariki* (Carr & May 1993); in Canada – highlighting the visibility of indigenous children (Ball & Pence 2006); Thai Wisdom conveyed in the new education reform (Anderson-Levitt 2003); and even Alaskan ways of knowing indigenously (Barnhardt & Kawagley 2008; Barnhardt 2008). Cross-culturally, albeit a critique of developed world dominance, more opportunities for visibility and funding seem key to what emerges as significant knowledge. In local, and indigenous developing world contexts such as the settings of the Case Study, redemptive as well as affirmative activism will increasingly aggregate and cumulate such knowledges.

Consequently, it is as much about child development – children and childhood – as it is about culture: as 'culture covers all aspects of the child's being' implying the inexorable link of learning to the social and cultural interface. Cross-cultural perspectives to ECCD provoke double standards judgements: sometimes in absolutist (for/ against) terms. Some researchers have tried to temper this tension, by proffering arguments of a world polity trend. Their argument is strengthened by a view that despite the 'national cultural context and conflicts', most educational systems across the

globe evidence increasing isomorphism. Increasingly, a view widely researched by theorists of world systems and world culture (Meyer et al 1997; Ramirez & Meyer 2002; McEneaney & Meyer 2000). Kathryn Anderson-Levitt's (2003) summary – 'local meanings global schooling' – however, renders the purported isomorphic bureaucratic structures, political processes, and principles (such as human rights) with a nuance – highlighting diverse local responses. Nonetheless, some researchers still perceive a world polity ascendancy (Joas & Knöbl 2009: 258).

6.3.11 Hierarchies of influence among ECCD stakeholders

The evidence from the case schools, collectively point to a hierarchy in the perceptual pecking order among stakeholders. On top of the sequence are the international actors to national agencies and officers (at the top); then down to those within the settings (teaching staff and children). From the framing of ECCD policy, the sorts of provision that emerged, and the practice that settings operationalised, stakeholders expressed perceptions of a top-down approach. On triangulation of interview data with documents, it was clear that local actors (such as the Ministry of Education) deferred and devolved policy formulations to likely sources of funding (among international organisation such as the UNICEF).

In the GECE School case study, although the school was a pioneer in the ECCD sector (and located in an urban metropolis) the long gestation of the 2004 ECCD policy and consultations never reached their door-step. This is not uncommon, Yanez and Yanez (2001: 46) observe, in respect of Venezuela, a contrast between 'what is happening in communities and what is planned at high governmental levels and multilateral organisations, which frequently seem to operate in different worlds'. The resultant policy–practice disjuncture is palpable; as evidenced in both case schools studied. Equally, most of provision and practice fully evinced global characteristics, with few instances of local traction and leverage over decisions. Similarly for NECE School, the expressions of unfamiliarity with the national policy document – despite the school's founding four years after the most recent ECCD policy – is further confirmation of the hierarchies in regard for higher level authorities (policy makers, funders, and experts) to the neglect of stakeholders at local levels. Within the local realm too, both school and home 'prestructure childhood' (Dunlop & Fabian 2002: 146); same ways that global ECCD conceive 'a certain universality of childhood'. Griebel & Niesel (2002: 73) contend that 'what parents expect, fear, and hope influences their child'. There is therefore no doubt that such hierarchical relationships play out in global and local

interactions. Thus, the instructive gradations within each realm: the top–down relationship among (and within) global–local, parent–child, staff–child, and proprietor–staff, GES–schools, Ministry of Education–GES and ultimately the Global–Ghana (MOE), are all reflective of due regard to hierarchies.

When examining this hierarchy in relation to the global level it becomes apparent that national level stakeholders are subsumed and wield little influence; in the determination of the trajectories that policy, provision and practice assumed. The chain of evidence – from observed happenings, documents, interviews, and focus groups – upon analysis predominantly defer to the global undercurrents as constituting the source of influence on early childhood education. In seeking to answer the research question that implicates the developed world in developing world childhoods, these unquestionable influential forces from the global on the local adds yet another layer of meaning. The power and influence of the global, in these hierarchical formulations, can also be viewed through the lens of civilisation theory (Eisenstadt 2000). The theory offers an explication of a continuing (historical) movement to incorporate and civilise swathes of ‘ancient’ nation-states and communities; sometimes through colonial force, and enforced modernity ‘from the barrel of the gun’ (Therbon 1992 cited in Joas & Knöbl 2009: 558). It therefore gives a certain validation to the attempts to explain away, among local actors, their culpabilities in adopting global templates. In the case study, stakeholders could almost apply this – as a fit for all – justification, for any inequities arising out of ECCD practice.

6.3.12 Hegemonic global discourses

From the review of the theoretical literature along with the empirical data from the cases, there is no doubt that early childhood education practice has been engulfed by dominant discourses. These are often deemed ‘scientific’ and thus essential; however, with deep roots within Western traditions. It was always striking the perceptions of local stakeholders that ECCD practice was constantly in the shadow of the global template. In fact, it was almost sacrilege in NECE School, and unorthodox in GECE School to consider deviating from this template: global ECCD and the discourses that defined ‘best’ and ‘right’ knowledges and practice were perceived as complete and ready to use ‘off the shelf’. Such templates actively and latently promoted a particular (ideal) of childhood and children. In fact the proprietors of both case schools cited European and US conferences and visits as the very nourishing sources of their ECCD vision and practice.

Pence and Hix-Small decry a ‘modernist certainty’ with an attendant univocalism (with a focus on *what works*) and narrow constructs of the ‘global child’ and context-free knowledges (2009: 80). The authors review a list of issues that significantly aid tendencies towards hegemonic discourses in the discipline of ECCD. Firstly, the collaborative works of ‘*Centres of Excellence*’ to produce and promote what works; leading to politically-induced obsessions with evidenced-based policy. Second, a gold standard truth-seeking *Randomised Controlled Trials* (RCTs) on privileged Western children; which ‘implicitly or explicitly are assumed to be relevant and meaningful for the 95 percent of the world’s children living outside that particular context’ (ibid: 84). The corpus of literature and studies reviewed in Chapter Three support the evidence basis for these hegemonic claims: the global influence and standings of High/Scope, the Chicago CPC and the Abecedarian studies remain unchallenged. These tendencies and the extent to which they influence practice across the globe, crucially explain the disconnections that are revealed in developing world contexts such as northern Ghana. Such discourses when placed in context raise more questions than they answer. Pence and Hix-Small have contemplated the following:

Many in the Majority World would also question: ‘Who decides what the critical questions will be?’ ‘Who will undertake the work?’ ‘What methodologies will be employed?’ ‘Who will be the recipients of the work?’ If the answers to all, or even some of these questions, is ‘Those from the West’ – then we must also consider the ethics of such a colonizing venture.

Similarly, Clay (1998) contends that big research and development budgets ultimately determine what and ‘whose evidence counts’ (cited in Raban 2001: 181). In the case study, the arduous attempts to operationalise such essential and best practice templates (as DAP for example) as opposed to contextually relevant authentic knowledges resulted in ‘corrupted’ alternatives that fell between two stools. Meaningfully insignificant to local contexts, yet globally critiqued as unworthy of mainstream recognition; as indigenous contributions to the global co-construction of knowledges (Nsamenang & Pence 2008).

6.4 Overview of the Synthesis

In this chapter a first opportunity has been utilised to integrate, synthesise, and thoroughly discuss the evidence from the case study. It is significantly the case that the two cases studied were similar and thus suited to a literal replication study – in a multiple case study research design. As with the initial case selection criteria, and with emergent knowledge of the contexts through immersion, the minor divergence (contrast) lay in two areas: first, the overly religious foundations of the NECE School case study relative to GECE School. Second, the traditional and diffusely rural settings of Yendi directly contrasted the Tamale case school sited in a cosmopolitan and urban metropolis. However, in the remit of this study to unearth how ECCD practice unravels in developing world contexts, the cases exemplified more similarities than contrasts.

The next chapter (Chapter Seven) will now aggregate the findings of the study, effectively gauging how the research questions have been answered, by both the theoretical and empirical evidence on ECCD in the Conclusion chapter.

Chapter Seven

7.0 Conclusion

This chapter concludes this research study on early childhood care and development (ECCD) in Ghana. The discussed themes from the synthesised data (in Chapter Six) from the case study have been adduced (reductively) to directly seek answers to the six research questions. In addition to these, this chapter interrogates the implications as well as the significance of the study, generally. As a case study, it has considered the particularities of individual cases leading to the general illuminated understandings and knowledge. Finally, this chapter ends the thesis by reflecting on what has been learned and gained from embarking on this doctoral research.

7.1.0 Findings: Answering the Research Questions

7.1.1 Research Question One: *How implicated is the developed world in the early child education policy, provision and practice in the developing world?*

The data from the multiple case study highlighted the role that the developed world plays in the childhood trajectories of children in the developing world. In the two case studies, it was without question that various standpoints supported the claim (of RQ 1) as follows:

a) *Global Forces*: Within the research contexts the role of international ECCD actors was unquestionable. In the northern region of Ghana, a poor part of the country, the case schools instantiated the capitulation to a gold standard global practice. This trend traversed aspects of policy formulation, the nature and extent of provision, and the content of the resultant praxis.

On policy, it is almost certain that without the advances at the international level there was little evidence of local movements to independently initiate ECCD policy. The entirety of the 2004 ECCD Policy by the Government of Ghana, significantly resulted from a multiplicity of actions

beyond the shores of Ghana. Among the factors were: the UNCRC of 1989, the Jomtien 1990 education conference, the international impetus to democratise, leading to the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, the United Nations' MDGs as well as the Dakar EFA of 2000, and finally the local reactions via the Presidential Review Committee (2002) which produced the 2004 ECCD Policy. One striking aspect of policy, from the perceptions of stakeholders was the absence of local inputs into the 2004 policy document. An immediate disconnect resulted affecting schools already operating and catering for preschool aged children and early childhood; as well as newer ones that came in the wake of new policy. Both case schools along with other stakeholders: the staff, parents and management had little knowledge of how policy was developed. As schools they just waited to be told what new directives to follow; to which they had to comply: a business-as-usual way they related to policy makers (the MOE and the GES).

Some researchers have catalogued a chain of external influences that influenced the trajectory of policy, provision and practice assumed. A requirement by the World Bank and the IMF to meet certain poverty reduction targets in initiatives such as: PRS 1 & 2, HIPC Initiatives, and other Debt Relief benchmarks forced the government to make allowances to accommodate an unexamined policy – on ECCD (Laird 2012; Twum-Danso & Ame 2012). With little local participation, along with rushed equations of ECCD with poverty alleviation, it is unsurprising that the character of ECCD policy feature less of the local circumstances; with its real nature reflecting a global template. UNICEF is particularly credited with being the engine that drove all aspects of the Ghanaian ECCD policy. The current operational curriculum, in support of the preschool policy, has UNICEF boldly acknowledged on its cover and pages. Added to this, most milestones since policy was initiated are only measured on the websites of the UNESCO and UNICEF; to whom reports, and accounts are rendered on how the childhoods of children in Ghana are progressing. It is nonetheless the case, as argued in this thesis, that Ghana as a constitutive member of these international organisations represents one of its myriad outposts or playgrounds. Along with peer SSA and other developing nations, they both benefit and regret simultaneously. As members of the international community, they contribute and suffer the effects of agreed policies on the international stage. At the same time, as the most vulnerable in the developed/developing world categorisation, they benefit immensely from the resources from such external bodies. What is critical despite this, as analysis in Chapter Five showed, is the cumulative power that results in a power-over relationship among the global and the local.

As a consequence of the overly visible dominant role of global actors on Ghana's ECCD scene, it is not surprising that provision appears disconnected from policy. The contention that there is a non-alignment between policy and context (of provision in this instance) is explained here. With tropes of 'holistic child development' and public-private partnerships in education, the ECCD sector has subsequently been dominated by private provision. Both cases selected for the study were private: very few public schools catered for the range of provision covering the 0–8 years. At best, the few public schools with 'afterthought' preschool provisions only enrol for the two-year kindergarten (recommended in the 2004 policy). Another aspect to private provision of ECCD is their push to sell preschool education to parents as an investment. Yet again another instance of the sorts of human capital arguments that the WB and allied agencies used as a trump card to globalise and promote ECCD programmes (Penn 2010). The combined justifications based on human capital investment and poverty alleviation have proved problematic. However, private dominance means commercialised provision: resulting in the scant provision in areas such as the very rural and poverty-stricken places that badly needed such ECCD services. Another disjunctive aspect, is the nature of provision: local private providers arising out of disconnections with local policy authorities perceive ECCD in carrying privileged global terms. As a result, what gets provided as ECCD usually are imitations and mimics of already existing Western early childhood programmes. The two cases studied in the northern region, in Tamale and in Yendi, both exhibited to varying degrees a tendency to take in holistically such global programmes.

In this study, the claim that the developed world is implicated in the childhood trajectories of children in the developing world, as reflected in RQ 1; is ultimately borne out of these global undercurrents to policy and provision in local contexts such as the northern region of Ghana. What becomes of practice that is heralded by a foreign-driven ECCD policy, with a resultant private business provision. In the case study, the two schools simply conformed to standardised formats: in curricular subjects, content of learning, teaching and learning materials, and normative professionalism. The confused perspectives reflected in stakeholder views on lack of contextual cultural content to learning result from their lack of agency over ownership of local ECCD programmes. The token attempts to resolve this at ECCD practice level further accentuates the disarticulation between policy and practice. Undoubtedly the issue of developed world influences in the childhood trajectories of children – in the two schools of northern Ghana – finds ample explication from the range of evidence produced from the study.

b) *Africa's History of Education*: African history, insofar as education is concerned, is one of established historical vested interests, to a large extent. These usually emanate from actors with origins farther beyond the continent (global forces); a melange of 'historical traumas' that have confounded the growth of indigenous educational practices (Nsamenang & Tchombe 2011: 12). Some researchers refer to a triple education heritage (Nsamenang & Tchombe 2011; Gwanfogbe 2011): the indigenous, the Islamic-Arabic, and Western Christian waves through Africa. In this study, some answers have been sourced to explain both the historical and contemporary involvement of the developed world (dominated by former and current world powers) in the educational lives of children in Africa. The constant referent in stakeholder explications when queried on adopted educational practices was 'our former colonial masters': who while 'former' still seen to exert such influence through new programmes such as ECCD – and mimicked in contexts such as the case in northern Ghana (Baguma & Aheisibwe 2011: 32). Crucially, in relation to the contexts of this study, these historical waves of enforced knowledge systems have one element in common: their non-integration of the indigenous educational and learning systems. In Ghana, the evidence of global actors dictating the character of ECCD (in the 21st century) has resonance with the colonial missionary stance of the Basel Mission (in the 1830s) to 'evangelise' and 'civilise' local people via education (Omenyo 2006; Asare-Danso 2014).

7.1.2 Research Question 2: *How is global early childhood education perceived within the local context of Ghana?*

As indicated in RQ1, the adoption of globally-driven ECCD programmes – as captured in policy provision and practice in Ghana – indicated minimal local content. In the cases studied in Tamale and in Yendi, stakeholders along with their domains of interactivity clearly showed this (as outlined in Chapter Five). There was the confusion on the use of first or second language for instruction, disjunctions between the socio-cultural and historical realities vis-à-vis global trends, and between poverty levels and hegemonic discourses. In some ways the nature of policy such as that adopted in Ghana on ECCD, dictated provision which in turn carved out a certain practice. For stakeholders: children, parents, staff, management, education authorities and development partners, their respective attitudes in ways that they related to policy provision and practice naturally bore these incongruities. With policy formulated out of exigencies other than children's needs; with the mistaken view of parents that provision once existing called to be used and the

conception of knowledge transfer and care by a professional staff (mostly untrained), the disarticulation could not be better articulated.

Furthermore, colonial educational provision created disparities among the southern parts of Ghana and the north (Appiah 1992). In the two case schools studied – both located in the northern region – this was a widely held perception; and reflected the reality of provision and practice. On ECCD provision, the statistics for the south of Ghana show a near-universal enrolment into some sort of preschool prior to primary. In the northern parts of Ghana, as evidenced in the cases studied, a little under 30 percent of all those in primary schools had enrolled into preschool education. With poverty already a predominantly North–South affair (in Ghana), this disparity signals the failure of positioning of ECCD as a poverty alleviation strategy: in its scant success at intervening in such poverty-stricken communities in the North. The interpretation to this is that modern day Ghana has been unable to reverse colonial historical precedents (Nsamenang & Tchombe 2011). This study adds to the complexity; as findings suggests that there are contemporary layers of external control; significantly undermining any likely possibility of change.

In both the theoretical literature and the empirical evidence from the case study, global ECCD in its missionary posture in the developing world does little other than exacerbate pre-existing inequalities. Such inequalities as provisioning in poor localities high cost centres, the adoption of foreign methodologies in instruction including language (L2), and the wilful disregard of the cultural context of children, all constitute and reveal the disjunctions. Various researchers have hinted at crucial disconnections within indigenous contexts when Western-driven educational agendas are enforced (Twum-Danso & Ame 2012; Penn 2001, 2010; Nsamenang & Tchombe 2011; Boyden & Bourdillon 2012; Stambach 2003). In this study, the indictment of incongruity between the global phenomenon of ECCD and local developing world contexts such as Yendi and Tamale, in northern Ghana, does not dismiss the workability of early childhood education, but rather aims at optimising ECCD – by making it contextually relevant – for all the locals that cumulatively constitute the global.

6.1.3 Research Question 3: *What are the characteristics of the global–local dynamics on the policy, provision and practice of early childhood education?*

In the course of the case study, the research found the term ‘development partners’ (DPs) both interesting and curious. This featured in interactions, interviews and was overused in government policy documents. The context of this usage indicates that this is an umbrella term for actors (mostly international and foreign) within donor community who partner Ghana; in its efforts to develop. Among such influential actors are the United Nations agencies (UNDP, UNESCO and UNICEF), the WB and the IMF, INGOs (USAID, GTZ, DANIDA, DFID, JICA, WHO and the OECD), and powerful countries and regional groups (UK, USA, the Netherlands, Germany, the EU and the Scandinavian countries). A recent WB estimate of financial commitment for meeting certain agreed development targets stood at three billion (\$ 3 billion) USD (WB 2013). The government of Ghana as well looks to a Multi-Donor Budget Support network consisting of the WB among other DPs. Somehow, the power relations evident so far typifies a donor and a recipient situation, suggesting that the long-established dominion over poorer and developing parts of the world have experienced little change (Prout 2005). The implication for ECCD, as gleaned from the case study, is that there is little domestic leverage in the determination of essentials such as policy, provision and practice. Viewed procedurally with explications on RQ1 and RQ2, it is undoubtedly the case that any notion of a relationship among the global and the local have entailed capitulations to the global heralding huge disjunctions.

Locally in the case schools the global reach was never too far: a proprietor for one of the case schools stated that he had been heavily ‘influenced’ by US schools. By this, the case school proprietor was referring to his huge connections to the outside world; which made it possible to accomplish the mission. As indicated earlier in this chapter, in the framing of its ECCD policy encountered both empirical and theoretical evidence suggesting that global ECCD is not pursued without an agenda; its particular focus has been to demonstrate relevance of context to practice.

By its ECCD policy of 2004 Ghana had embarked on a new educational system: with the aim ‘to promote the survival, growth and development of all children (0–8 years) in Ghana...to ensure improved standard of living and enhanced quality of life for families in Ghana’ (GoG 2004). The policy document has offered a rationale – which partially responds to this RQ: as a policy it is seen as an enabling framework that comprehensively discharges the nation’s responsibility to children. In its detail the policy cites Article 28 of the Constitution of Ghana (Rights of children), the Children’s Act 1998 (Act 560), and the by-laws of local authorities on child welfare. All these

adduced to provide a strong rationale for the 2004 ECCD policy: whose ultimate goal was to alleviate poverty and bring about development. During the process of the research, the case schools and their settings exemplified such rationale. In the main, provision and practice was essentially about using a modern tool (ECCD) to conquer the endemic deprivation and poverty in the northern region. On the understandings conveyed that ECCD was new, and could provide a panacea to intractable poverty, it is unimaginable that local circumstances did not motivate and dominate centrally, what children were exposed to. Instead, slices of the global rather than slices of the lived reality of children continually defined the character of the ECCD provision and practice.

Significantly on provision in resource-poor contexts, this research hesitates to definitively recommend ECCD, as it is currently composed and practiced. In the local settings of the research, evidence abounds of the majority of children not being present and accounted for in schools; not just preschool but in primary school. The extent of deprivation and need simply made education unaffordable: the few that enrolled then faced extreme alienation from their authentic local cultures and meaning-making systems. Moreover, the lack of a publicly funded intervention scheme in turn egregiously aggravated the prevalent inequalities in the already poor local community.

Consequently, in response to the research question: the value of the adoption of ECCD programmes from the stance of this research is ambivalent. From the perception of local stakeholders, ECCD was viewed benignly, sometimes without strong rationale.

7.1.4 Research Question 4: *What elements informed the development of Ghana's early childhood care and development (ECCD) policy of 2004?*

This research question has been answered by all the issues presented in the wake of attempts to implement an ECCD policy in Ghana. The claim here is that ECCD in Ghana was heavily influenced BY external sources. In the case schools, as well as in the documentary evidence and processes leading to the 2004 ECCD policy, it was clear that while structurally embedded within existing administrative systems, external stakeholders held more influence. Of significance in the process was the image building

exercise too by the government: ECCD was in pursuit of the realisation of the vision of the 1992 Constitution; also, Ghana was rated highly internationally and cared about its international standing especially in relation to its pioneer role in the ratification of the CRC. These played a role, along with the ferment on the international stage on driving the childhood agenda – such as the Education for All initiative.

While justifications could sometimes be made on the grounds of the best interest of the child for provisioning policy, very little contextually evidenced considerations of such local circumstances. For example, majority of children attend public schools and yet they are the places that lack such provision outlined in policy. Most provision still dominated by the private sector, with government playing catch up to fill the gaps.

7.1.5 Research Question 5: *How does Ghana's local context and culture feature within current ECCD policy, provision and practice?*

Thus far it has been established that ECCD as it operated walked on two legs: the global and the local. It is the position in this study that ECCD originates from a foreign source (defined as global) and therefore is perceived as the invading force, into the local. The two settings of the case study – Yendi and Tamale, constitute the local. Furthermore, the indigenous context as demonstrated in the description of the case studies, shows remarkable awareness of tradition and culture. This is in addition to the social, historical, and cultural realities of the people of the north and Ghana for that matter, define the fabric of the local community as one that is intrinsically indigenous. Be that as it may, global interactions have implied that no populations exist in isolation: to that extent northern Ghana becomes one of the local playfields of the global.

The case study revealed local understandings of culture through their meaning-making systems: namely language, food and dress culture, festivals, cultural relics and customary rituals. Most stakeholders felt local language was an important vehicle to convey a locally appropriate practice. The use of the English Language (L2) rather than Dagbani – the mother-tongue (L1), was highlighted as problematic. Other aspects of culture deemed relevant to the local context, among

Dagombas such as dress culture, rituals, and relics were portrayed negatively. The condescension in respect of local culture as has been argued stem from the undercurrents to practice: within which the developed world has been implicated. However, there was evidence that locally too many stakeholders had only a fleeting regard for culture. In a documentary review in the case study, a policy document stated: ‘enforce existing laws to reduce all forms of child abuse and socio-cultural practices which are detrimental to the well-being of children’ (GoG 2014: Section 3.2). By this, some aspects of local culture are likely to inhibit the construction of a holistic ECCD policy. Cumulatively, mutually incompatible positions concerning local culture breeds confusion even among those who ought to hold it in esteemed regard. Unsurprisingly, this reflected in the ambivalent positions expressed, during the case study, on the predominance of foreign culture in Ghanaian society.

More importantly, childhood as known within northern Ghanaian culture and society is different to that of the ‘global child’. Typically, the importance of kith and kin along with responsibility embedded within a community, equally departs farther from the individualistic childhood typologies. In such indigenous contexts, emphasis is placed on mutual reciprocal relations: hence, an individualistic, agential rights-based approach as conveyed legalistically in policy is almost certainly unworkable. Therefore, the research evidence from the case study points to an incongruous relationship and interaction between local northern Ghanaian culture and the global. Significantly, in the constructions of ECCD policy, provision, and practice it is apparent that a universal template has stultified local cultural input, thus consequentially affecting practice. Local constructions of childhood ought necessarily to account for the catalogue of suffering germane to the daily realities of children. Affordances to dedicate childhood exclusively to schooling is a uncommon: common is the competition and coexistence between schooling and work. Globally, schools are seen as the place for childhoods.

Moreover, the question of relevance of Ghanaian culture to its adopted ECCD programme, as well as the socio-cultural realities of children have been deemed less relevant. The alternative in the subscription to other-than local culture to motivate ECCD policy and practice has resulted in a confounded praxis: an ECCD programme neither suited to be mainstreamed globally nor authentically rich enough in local culture to be deemed indigenous praxis.

7.1.6 Research Question 6: *How influential are stakeholders on ECCD on matters of policy, provision and practice?*

The 2004 ECCD policy defined stakeholders as follows: parents, communities, private proprietors/investors, NGOs, Development Partners, philanthropic organisations/personalities, and the Government of Ghana (GoG 2014). Although children are not specifically mentioned, ironically, it is nonetheless certain that parents are presumed to represent the family context (including children). This has a cultural explication relative to the social ontology of children in Ghana; as children are widely seen through the prism of the larger societal (adult) context, and not individually as to confer agency. As a case study, this research study sought the participation of majority of the stakeholders – as defined; to fully explore the phenomenon. There were some significant limitations to this inclusive attempt to involve all stakeholders: The Ministry of Education deferred to the Ghana Education Service; while the ‘Development Partners’ sampled (UNICEF-Ghana) cited busy schedule and travels as a reason for their non-participation. Broadly, the perception among stakeholders was to the effect that much of what was practiced was dictated from elsewhere. The attitude to deflect responsibility was common, among stakeholders: as each stakeholder category quite ingeniously passed the buck. This was reflected in the power relations: as between children and parents, school management and teaching staff, funders of ECCD and policy makers. Similar such hierarchies reflected in the constructions of policy provision and practice.

There is strong evidence to indicate the prevalence of hierarchies, among stakeholders in relation to ECCD. In Chapter Six the top-down relationship alluded to assume a certain nuance among the various categories of ECCD stakeholders. Critically though, the apex of such hierarchies reflects in the power asymmetry between the global and the local. In particular in relation to the genesis of ECCD on the Ghanaian landscape, and education generally, it is undoubted the enormity of leverage that global actors have exerted. While locally within the case school contexts the immediacy of influence came from the GES and MOE, beyond these policy making agencies were more powerful global actors. In the most part, the major elements of ECCD: policy framework, pedagogical constructs, curriculum, childhood influences, and practitioner attitudes showed lots of influences of other cultures. It is apparent that a significant core of what was required to get ECCD functional in Ghana was devolved to ‘development partners and philanthropists’, who it was expected were to:

Continue to provide technical as well as financial assistance. Technical assistance could be in the form of research, dissemination of research findings and best practices from other countries, networking, developing appropriate curriculum, capacity building and professional training. Support programmes to train trainers. Support the initial start-up cost of programmes including providing relevant infrastructure. (GOG 2004)

Critically, all that was reserved as a role for local stakeholders was to make children available; which in certain instances proved a challenge due to local circumstances. In an encounter with the reality in the case study settings, the evidence suggests that local stakeholder's positive attitudes aided the operation of ECCD. Considering the levels of poverty and deprivation, families' decisions to enrol children into fee-paying schooling demonstrate enough goodwill and faith in provision. While local stakeholders might have cooperated positively, their inability to dictate content of childrearing and upbringing is a significant shortcoming. Perhaps, the very nature of provision is suggestive of certain privileging which stunts the deserved regard for what families and other stakeholders bring on board – to ECCD practice.

7.2 Implications of the Study

As set out in the research questions that drove this study; the motivation to seek clarity between global ECCD and local practice essentially had ramifications. In the main, ECCD clothed in its global fabrics provoked myriad status connotations, the generality of these implicated the developed world in the childhoods of developing world societies. Equally, the findings show that the predominantly foreign character of ECCD policy, provision and practice had resonance with the equivalences between ECCD and education; similar to perceptual understandings of globalisation and colonialism. Simply, ECCD was to globalisation what education was to colonialism, among indigenous communities in the developing world.

7.2.1 Implications for ECCD Policy, Provision and Practice

There is no doubting the usefulness of the clarity gained from the case study of the Northern Region of Ghana. While the implications specifically arise from those limited cases studied to Northern Ghana, it is generally the case that the application of the same ECCD policy has characterised the terrain of most provision and practice. Therefore, although the intent is not to generalise findings of the case study; still the outcome of the research has a general impact on how ECCD is understood.

In the here and now, ECCD in Ghana insofar as it maintains its global outlook in policy, provision and practice remains an unnatural feature to the contexts of practice. Although the undercurrents to policy were largely foreign, this study observed examples of missed opportunities to incorporate local culture into ECCD. Such redemptive elements highlight the potentialities that practitioners can explore for the future refinement of local praxis. There are many instances: the deviation from GES prescription of the local language during the early childhood phase, the lack of attention to the lived realities of children and their socio-economic standings, the predominant role of private provision among the rural poor, the condescending attitude to within-the-family parental and community care, the obscuring foreign conceptions of childhood, and the egregious conceptualisation of ECCD as a poverty alleviation programme, all feature prominently. It is clearly the case that a locally conceived early childhood education programme will reflect contextual appropriateness.

On another realm, this study while critical of global ECCD has strongly argued the position that for context-specific and appropriate policy and provision, the local context require an introspection. Rather than inherit, import and imitate – by looking outwardly – there are immense local possibilities for knowledge acquisition, production and dissemination. The experimentation with a crucial phase of development – early childhood – in the exposure to programmes beyond their meaningful grasp is a cost yet unaccounted for. The repeated references to disjunctive relations between the global and the local imply that ECCD as currently conceived and practiced feed the existing ambivalence. A Ghanaian ECCD policy, provision and practice ought to be one fitted to the local context.

While strongly argued, the foregoing views suffer a certain limitation: the lack of data on the effects and outcomes on the exposure to global ECCD deserve to be acknowledged. This is also an empirical limitation of the study: the fact that it was not conceived as both a longitudinal and an

effectiveness study of policy and provision in relation to the future schooling of children in Ghana. On the first limitation, had the study been conceived longitudinally the researcher would have had sufficient time for immersion within contexts. This would have significantly rendered context more able to achieve both breadth and depth of analyses. Equally, this is probably the most suitable methodology to interrogating questions of outcomes and future trajectories. On the other hand, an effectiveness study would allow the study to delineate the effects arising out of home and those conferred by preschool (and ECCD generally). To that extent, categorical conclusions could be reached on the implied effects of exposure to ECCD, within the developing world contexts. On account of these, ECCD was not effective while it retained its standardised, universalised and globalised character; without due regard to cultures, contexts, and circumstance leaves open future possibilities and questions for exploration; while the specific and delimited RQs for this particular study are complete.

7.2.2 Personal Significance of the Research

In embarking on this study, I regarded the research as both a philosophical enterprise to engage with new knowledge; and at the same time a personal ambition to contribute to a burgeoning area of education locally (ECCD). On both counts, it is apparent that globally the debate closed even before it began: considering the settled status and hegemony assumed in the global practice of early childhood education. The extent of this personal mission has heightened the ethical and perspectival stakes of this study. Ethically, the passion arising out of belongingness to a context (deemed deficient) of study has entailed a semblance of phenomenological distance: distant enough to estrange the familiar yet proximal enough to learn and contextualise meaning. On the other hand, the subscription to a predominantly interpretivist methodology based on the cultural appropriateness of practice render a perspectival narrative.

Early childhood education, good or bad, has to be meaningfully located within contexts that seek to utilise such programmes. In particular, the government perception that it remains an enabler; thus leaving provision as a ‘free for all’ is disingenuously harmful to existing educational provision. At least, some experimentation with intervention programmes, following policy in resource poor communities appears an acceptable position. This while worthwhile, in and by itself, has the additional effect of imposing local context and culture on the global template. Short of this, the already bemoaned North–South divide on development becomes increasingly intractable. Further,

as a child from a context where ‘children are seen not heard’ (local Ghanaian proverb); agency ought to be conferred in ways that do not unsettle existing customary and cultural positions. The apparent yet unconscious ‘traumatic’ inferences drawn in children’s exposure (or in some cases non-exposure) to early childhood education egregiously heighten existing inequalities. The deficits that children harbour ultimately, in their various life trajectories become more confounded; a child of the global immersed within circumstances inconsistent with local realities. A deep introspective reflection would seem to suggest I personify and embody such contradictions: where for instance lots of distance has resulted between my person and local cultural precepts – clearly defining my ‘accidental scholarship’. The exposure to western education – in my personal case – is perhaps similar to ECCD as experienced by children of this generation.

As a researcher therefore, I perceived the research as a privileged role to both ‘prove and improve’: by embarking on a doctoral study to highlight understandings. In doing so I retain an antithetical neutrality; in doubling as a conduit for the less powerful and less privileged people, in developing world contexts such as northern Ghana. There is therefore a sense of being written-in based on subjectivities and interpretative stances assumed; due largely to my origins within the context of the research. Academically, the release from the bond and encumbrances of critical questions herald emotions of liberation.

In the end, the findings on the accomplishment of the research have had various significance to me as a researcher. The depth of learning, as the knowledge garnered from the process are immeasurable. It is clearly certain, that by dint of undertaking this exercise, my perspectives on children and childhoods wherever they may be, have been altered indefinitely. The critical negotiations of various epistemological and philosophical stances have naturally left a mark; with the emphasis that: in the end knowledge remains perspectival, local and meaningfully contextual.

7.2.3 Contribution to Knowledge

The aim for embarking on this doctoral research to explore the relevance of early childhood care and development programmes in the developing world necessarily implied a contribution to existing knowledge. In suggesting that some gaps prevailed in early childhood education knowledge; the implication was that some attempt would be made to narrow the dearth of

knowledges. This study perceives its contribution in three-related areas: an empirical research using mixed methodologies; new conceptualisation and theorising with global/local significance; and finally, enhanced early childhood education knowledges and new understandings of developing world contexts.

7.2.3.1 Empirical Contribution to Knowledge

This research study acknowledges unreservedly its limitations (and deficiencies in many respects) largely due to the lack of context-based material to assist the research. In the end such conceptual constructs and formulations – hybridity, wholeness, and cross-cultural – were remedial attempts to address such deficits. An existing empirical meta-synthesis would have progressed the quality of the knowledge sought via more incisive and novel research questions.

This research aims to be considered a significant empirical contribution to the developing world context. Considering the established hegemonic dominance of the global in the global–local epistemic dialogue; such minimal contributions as this research ought to be regarded highly. Furthermore, by the application of acceptable global gold standard quality research standards coupled with novel methodologies that mixed methods have become, this study aims to achieve a competitive fit within acceptable academic research traditions. Such empirical considerations as the critically framed research questions, the leads to the case study methodology, the application of survey to the case selection, and the triangulation of data coming from the pursuit of diverging lines of inquiry and methods; highlight originality and collectively show regard for a good qualitative research.

Furthermore, the systematic adherence to ethical implications sets a standard of quality that researchers within the developing world can model.. Also, this research study in converting such deficits into opportunities, by adopting wholeness or hybrid or cross-cultural approaches highlight a transactional relationship that could aid the epistemic trade among the developing and developed worlds. In an increasingly globalised world, complaints of an ever-widening inequality, and disadvantages at many local levels, find a practical theoretical framework within which fairness, equity and democracy can prevail.

As a case study however, the opportunities remain for future possible areas and questions to explore. In particular and of interest to this study, if the developed world is implicated in the schooling trajectories of developing world children; what comparative empirical basis exists for exploring future trajectories of all children across the binarisms of the global–local? The potential for multi-sited and longitudinal research designs might yet lead to even better understandings of how early childhood education is affecting children globally; within their respective local contexts.

7.2.3.2 New Questions and Reconceptualisations

The deficiency of extant empirical and theoretical knowledge to progress this research led the study along detours that proved challenging. In the abiding interest of the study for context-based knowledges, questions of validity were naturally germane to the eventual constructions of the research. In the end, the futility resulting from a predominantly global epistemic hegemony; and the frustration of scant indigenous conceptualisations, drove the researcher to view the terrain differently. It is such reconfiguration that led to novel questions based on depth of engagement with both the theoretical and empirical data. Furthermore, reconceptualisations were occasioned; on the global–local epistemic realm, the developed world–developing world juxtapositions to their foundational histories that continue to inform and dictate contemporary attitudes, and also the critical questions of de-contextualisation (via ECCD) as a tool to aid globalisation in ways that for example education assisted colonisation.

The foregoing is important, especially in the attempts made to globally govern education. The position of this study is that contextual appropriateness is key to any attempt to compensate for the consequences of ways to account for children and childhood in early childhood care and development so that, whatever the formulations and constructs now or in the future, local indigenous voices become normatively germane to the eventually engendered global precepts, ideals and programmes. It is on these bases that the suggested implications, in the highlighted global–local disjunctions, and questions of stakeholder, contextual and cultural appropriateness of ECCD, became the dominant lines of enquiry in this doctoral research.

7.2.3.3 New Knowledge of Developing World Contexts

In view of the paucity of developing world context-based knowledges generally; and empirical researches in particular, this doctoral research study adds to the catalogue of the few chronicled researches. The world of social research would be underserved without it; considering that a case study methodology allowed an illumination of a little-known context – thereby bringing clarity to the unclear boundaries between the global phenomenon of early childhood education and local developing contexts such as northern Ghana. In particular, the unearthed disarticulations, disjunctions and disadvantages within ECCD delivery arise due to the adoption of a global template supplanted on a local domestic context. In the use of mixed methods, although predominantly using a qualitative approach the adherence to dictates of quality – for reliability, validity, and trustworthiness – further affirm the centrality of new methodologies to researching in education.

In conclusion, this research shows how the early childhood education phenomenon progresses from the taken for granted status to an engagement based on mutually reinforced understandings – at both the global and the local levels. In seeking future evidence on the workings of ECCD, by whatever research means or method, it would be very satisfactory to accomplish it fully within a vantage position of a local developing world context. Because, by whatever undercurrent and its force, all knowledge is contextual, perspectival, and locally meaningful. For early childhood care and development to remain relevant in northern Ghana, it must be based on the contextual conceptualisations of the indigenous people. Anything less, results in de-contextualisation that alienates children and childhoods from their indigenous socio-genesis. The results are likely alternative foundations upon which early childhood care and development policy, provision and practice rest within the Ghanaian context, neither accepted globally to be mainstreamed as standard praxis; nor indigenously integral to local lived realities.

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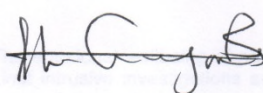
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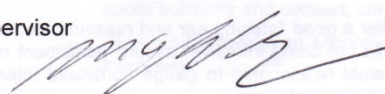
APPENDIX A

Signed 

Research student: A.I. IBRAHIM

Date: 20/11/2013

Supervisor



Date 28/11/13

Michel Hammud (Director of Research Degree Students)

Action

Please submit to the Research Office (Louisa Hopkins, room WE132)

Action taken



Approved



Approved with modification or conditions – see below



Action deferred. Please supply additional information or clarification – see below

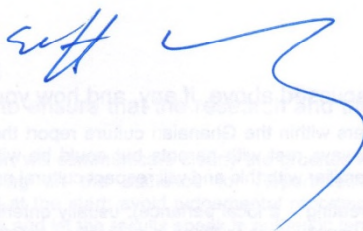
Name

LA LINDA

Date

25.11.17

Signature



Stamped

Notes of Action

Date:

Dear Sir/Madam:

Permission for Child Participation in Research

I am a doctoral research student at the University of Warwick, and as a major component of my research I need to generate empirical data, for which I seek your child's participation. This letter seeks to request, formally, for your permission to allow your child to participate in the data generation process. Having conducted a pilot, this phase of the research will span a period of 6 months covering July to December 2014. I have been given permission by your child's school to conduct part of my research within their setting.

My research interest is in early childhood care and development. As part of my research focus, I intend to observe how children go through their daily routines, as well as have conversations with the staff and the children. For a narrow focus on children's perspectives, your child has been chosen to participate in an interview with me, within the environs of the setting.

The entire process of the research works on the utmost regard for confidentiality, respect and anonymity. While your child's participation is deemed important to the process, please do note that participation remains voluntary and no adverse variation in behaviour will result, toward you or your child, emanating from your decision not to participate.

Please accept my sincere appreciation for taking time to consider this.

Yours faithfully,

Anyars Imoro Ibrahim

(Mobile 00233-20-3568630)

Consent for Participation in ECCD Research

I / We----- (Parent/s) hereby GIVE / REFUSE consent for
 ----- (Child's name) to participate in the said research.

Signed ----- Date -----

Thank you.

Date:

Dear Sir/Madam:

Request for Permission to Conduct Research

I am a doctoral research student at the University of Warwick, and as a major component of my research I need to generate empirical data, for which I seek your collaboration. This letter, along with the questionnaire, seeks to invite you to participate; and to request, formally, for permission to allow me into your setting to conduct the academic research toward the award of a doctorate degree. Having conducted a pilot, this phase of the research will span a period of six (6) months covering July to December 2014.

As part of the process, the methods to be applied for data generation among others include: questionnaire, interviews of individual practitioners, children and parents, group interviews, observations of practice within the setting and in rooms, video and audio/digital recording, note-taking, reflective diaries, documentary reviews, photographs as well as general conversations about the work of the setting. While I have sought and received an ethical approval of these methods, I intend to uphold the highest standards of practice and legality. To this end, participation will be accorded respect, confidentiality and anonymity. While prior permissions will be sought when identifying you or your institution in this research, this remains an academic research and transcripts along with other generated material will be published in my doctoral thesis.

I do appreciate your time and your kindness in filling in the attached questionnaire which offers an overview of my research interest. I will be happy to answer any further queries you may have regarding this research; and look forward to working with you.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Anyars Imoro Ibrahim

(Mobile 00233-20-3568630)

APPENDIX D

CASE STUDY PROTOCOL

Fieldwork component of the PhD Research on ECCD in Ghana.

Working Title:

Stakeholder Perspectives on Early Starts to Schooling as an Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Model in Ghana

This is a qualitative study, embracing the traditions of constructivism and interpretivism. Essentially, this is couched as case study, using ethnography as a basis (Pollard 1987); as well as an attempt to seek boundary clarity where there is a seeming disjunction between phenomenon (of ECCD policy) and context (Ghana as a developing country) (Yin 2009).

The Study will proceed as follows:

- i. 20 Questionnaire to survey provision in the northern region of Ghana: convenience sample of five districts
- ii. Further sampling based on questionnaire returns along with an inclusion/exclusion criteria (e.g. preschool with primary attached) to select TWO cases for in-depth study
- iii. CASE STUDY ONE: July to September 2014 (Semi-structured interviews; Participant Observations; Documentary Analysis – field notes/diary reflections)
- iv. CASE STUDY TWO: October to December 2014 (Methods above to be replicated in second case)
- v. TRIANGULATE with STAKEHOLDER interviews (travel to ACCRA, Capital of Ghana): Between 1st Case and 2nd case/ and after 2nd case

DATA ANALYSIS

Due to the rich and in-depth nature of the research, analysis will proceed along with continuing data generation. In particular, case by case analysis before a cross-case is attempted.

FIELD INSTRUMENTS: PhD Research on ECCD in Ghana from July to December 2014

Item	✓	Comments
Survey Questionnaire (Providers Sampling)		READY
Interview Schedules		READY
Observation schedules		READY
Field Notes		Notepad ready
Journal Diary		Pukka notebook ready
Digital Recording equipment		IPhone used in PILOT/Alternative required
Laptop		READY
Letter Headed Paper		READY
Consent Letter to PARENTS		READY
Letters to Accompany Questionnaire		Same as below (letter + Questionnaire)
Letters to Stakeholders		READY

Parent Interviews (Preschool attendees and non-attendees)

Parental interviews will cover parents with children in early primary: this will allow the interview to sample parents with children who either attended or did not attend preschool prior to primary enrolment.

1. Did your child attend preschool prior to enrolment at age 6 into primary school? Yes/ No
2. What informed your decision to enrol/ not to enrol your child before the age of 6?
3. Options exist in the community for your child, under 6, if they did not attend preschool?
4. What difference does it make to your child, because they attended/ did not attend preschool?
5. What do you think children might lose out on for non-attendance to preschool?
6. What issues influenced your decision to enrol/ not to enrol your child into preschool?
7. How much of the decision was based on: **a) work pressure** **b) peer influence (new trend)** **c) professional advice** **d) language development** **e) fear of primary placement** **f) other**.....
8. What age would you consider was appropriate for children to start compulsory schooling?
9. What other options exist, besides schooling, for children below the age of 6?
10. What needs does this setting meet that could not be met by being at home with parents?
11. How do you see your role as a parent, when it comes to decisions on policy, provision and practice?
12. How much of the ECCD content, in this school/setting, do you think takes your local culture and history into consideration?
13. In your view, is ECCD largely driven by: **a) Local** **b) Foreign** influences?
14. Is it your expectation that your child will continue attendance for the statutory basic education of 11 years?
15. Finally, why does ECCD matter, in Ghana's educational priorities?

PRACTITIONER Interviews within settings

1. What does early education mean to you?
2. Where do your ideas of ECCD come from?
3. What age would you say was too early or too late for schooling to start?
4. How would you describe what you do, in your setting, with children below the age of 6? a) **Education** b) **Schooling**
Why?
5. What needs, do you think exist in this community, that call for early education of children?
6. What do you provide children that they may not have the opportunity for, outside of preschool? What would non-attendees miss out on?
7. How much of the considerations, for early education, are influenced by:

a) **Local** b) **foreign** sources?
8. What role does preschool (early education) play in children's future schooling, within your setting?
9. What expectation do you have of children below the age of eight (8)?
10. What are the main influences on your practice (what you do) within the setting?
11. Is the local culture and history relevant in ECCD content? Why?
12. In what ways does your role as an early years' practitioner contribute to ECCD?
13. What is your expectation of parents of children aged of 3 – 8 within your setting?
14. Who are the other major stakeholders in your professional work?
15. In the scheme of things, does ECCD matter in Ghana's educational system? Why?

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

1. What does Early Childhood Care and Development mean to you?
2. What do you think are the main considerations that should guide the framing of an ECCD policy?
3. How much of current policy (ECCD GoG 2004) incorporates these elements?
4. Generally, what are your expectations of children aged 3 – 8?
5. In your view, should consideration be given first to what exists in a child's community before the decision to enrol into preschool? Or is childhood just built for schooling regardless?
6. How would you typically describe what the Ghanaian childhood is?
7. What do you think accounts for the decision for school starts at the age of 4?
8. Considering the Ghanaian socio-cultural and historical context, why do we need an early schooling policy in Ghana?
9. How much of policy, provision and practice, in your view is: a) home-grown/local b) foreign-driven?
10. How concerned are you that most of ECCD content is foreign to the Ghanaian context?
11. Could a Ghanaian ECCD programme emerge and flourish without borrowing ideas from the West or European contexts?
12. How has research influenced ECCD policy and practice?
13. How much consideration is given to local capacity, compared to foreign sources, on matters affecting ECCD?
14. What aspects of Ghanaian culture would you like to see emphasised in ECCD content?
15. What are the main influences, on your role as an ECCD stakeholder, when making decisions?

Research questions	Questions	Further Probes
1. How implicated is the developed world in the early child education policy, provision and practice in the developing world?	Undercurrents----Decisions On ECCD-----Children's Schooling Futures Stakeholder role; Early starts; Assumptions/constructions of childhood Funding source; Knowledge base/Research	How foreign-driven is Ghana's ECCD policy and practice? FOCUS: ECCD Policy; Curriculum and pedagogy; Stakeholders' role; local context/content; international influences
2. How is global early childhood education perceived within the local context of Ghana?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At what age would you say it is appropriate for children to start schooling? What is your view based on? How do you think the decision is made to start school at age four (4)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you know? What difference does the age make? How does an earlier start affect a child? How would a later start affect a child?
3. What are the characteristics of the global-local dynamics on the policy, provision and practice of early childhood education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What age might you consider to be too early to start schooling? Once decision to start schooling is made, is it your expectation that children should stay in school for the statutory period of 11 years (Basic Education)? Is school the only option for children at these early years? Could children be engaged elsewhere other than school? What role does preschool play in children's continuing attendance through the statutory period? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did you decide this? What makes you think children can cope with all those years in school? What options, outside of schooling, exist in the community for children?
4. What elements informed the development of Ghana's early childhood care and development (ECCD) policy of 2004?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How child-driven (in terms of their needs) is ECCD policy, provision and practice? How have you influenced ECCD policy, provision and practice? What aspects of ECCD practice do you think incorporates some of your ideas/views? Would you generally say that ECCD policy and practice is locally-driven (local issues-based)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are decisions bottom-up or made top-down? Give specific examples of contribution to ECCD policy, provision and practice? How much of practice is local/foreign?
5. How does Ghana's local context and culture feature within current ECCD policy, provision and practice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In what ways do you think research plays a role in ECCD policy and practice? Generally, where are your ideas of ECCD from? How much of your ideas, in your view, are influenced by a) local factors; b) foreign factors? Is current ECCD focus driven by the fact that it's the newest fashion trend within children's education? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you aware of any research? Could you elaborate further? Local issues – Examples Foreign influences – Examples
6. How influential are stakeholders on ECCD on matters of policy, provision and practice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What aspects of ECCD practice, do you perceive, take your cultural realities into consideration? How appropriate is the cultural component of ECCD practice? How predominant are local cultural issues compared to foreign influences, in ECCD content? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What cultural realities do you regard as necessary? Examples Illustrate further the local and foreign influences mentioned?

Sample Unit	Sample	Comments
i. Preschool Ages 3 – 4; 4 – 5; 5 – 6*	2 from each cohort Total = 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 separate interviews (3 cohorts) • Mixture of verbal questions and picture cards • Drawings (impressions of preschool experience)
ii. Primary 1 and 2 Preschool Attendees*	2 from each group Total = 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 group interview • Questions to individuals within the group
iii. Primary 1 and 2 Preschool Non-Attendees*	2 from each group Total = 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as ABOVE
iv. Parents With child attending preschool*	5 parents Total = 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Individual interviews • Focus Group (where possible)
v. Parents Without Preschool but primary school enrolled*	5 parents Total = 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Individual interviews • Focus Group (where possible)
vi. Professionals – working with children both preschool and primary school*	1 adult from each stage (3 – 4; 4 – 5; 5 – 6; P1 and P2) Total = 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Focus Groups • 5 Post-Observation interviews
vii. OTHER Stakeholders – Policymakers, Academics, Bureaucrats, Development Partners, Funders, NGOs and INGOs**	8 across the research phases Total = 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore FG possibility of Stakeholders • 8 key informants (interviews) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ministry of Education; 2) Ghana Education Service; 3) UNESCO; 4) Ghana National Association of Teachers–ECCD; 5) National Nursery and Teacher Training Centre (NNTTC); 6) NNTTC Model School; 7) ECCD–NGO; 8) ECCD Coordinator for Northern Region

*The sample of **29** within the case study setting will be replicated in the **second** case study setting totalling **58**

To the above will be added a sample of **8 key informants defined as other stakeholders totalling **66**

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Case Study

1	2
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Subject/Focus

Date -----

Stage/Class-----

Length of Observation: START --

----- FINISH-----

Context					
Observations/Occurrences	Frequency/Timing				
Key to Items being looked for/observed	Emerging Themes				

Reflections/Comments/Themes

APPENDIX E

Questionnaire for ECCD Providers in the Northern Region of Ghana

Name of Institution/Setting/Centre/School..... Contact.....

Location..... Official Title Number on School Roll.....

Main funder (Government/NGO/Private/Company etc.).....

Started operation in Working Hours/Time

PROVISION

1. Ages that you cater for (Put a tick ✓)

0 – 2		3 – 4		5 – 6		6 – 7		7 – 8	
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2. Description of Provision/School/Centre (Please tick the boxes that apply to your setting)

Public/State/Government	
Private/Business/Individual	
Rural Area	
Urban Area	
Other description (Below)	
.....	

3. Have you got a Primary school on site? **Yes / No**

4. What provision do you have for children below the age of 6? (**Crèche, Nursery, Day Care, Kindergarten**)

5. What are the specific needs that your service provides, for children under the age of 6?

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6. In your view, what accounts for the increasing enrolment into pre-compulsory schooling?

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7. What is the nature of the relationship between your preschool and the primary school?

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8. Would you normally enrol children into primary school without preschool experience? **Yes / No. Please explain your answer**

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.....

POLICY

9. Do you follow an official curriculum from the Ghana Education Service? **Yes / No** (CIRCLE)

10. What ages do you apply the curriculum to, in your setting/school/institution?

11. Is it compulsory, by law, to follow the government curriculum? **Yes / No**

What do you think of this?

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12. In what ways have you contributed to this curriculum as an early childhood provider?

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13. What is the official age of compulsory enrolment into school, by law?

14. Does official enrolment age always work in practice? **Yes / No** **Please Explain**

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15. In your view, should there be a curriculum for preschool (ages 0 - 6)? **Yes / No** (CIRCLE)

Reason/s.....
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16. What other specific policies (Local and International) affect preschool aged children in your setting?.....

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17. As a provider of educational services, who are the other stakeholders you have a working relationship with?

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18. Can you briefly explain what the nature of the relationship is?

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19. What difference does having an early childhood care and development (ECCD) policy make?

Please explain
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PRACTICE

According to the UNESCO, early childhood covers the ages of 0 – 8;

20. Briefly outline what a typical day is like for children aged under 8, in your setting?

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21. Kindly write a brief list of the sorts of needs that you think children under 8 have?

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22. What difference does it make, in your view, whether children attend preschool or not?

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23. Would you describe what you provide as educational?

Yes / No

24. What role does research play in your daily work with children?

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25. What qualifications are required to work with the preschool aged children in your setting?

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26. What do children learn about their own locality and culture in your setting?

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27. Briefly comment on other influences, outside your setting, you think affect the children?

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Please feel free to add any additional comments/views you may have below:

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Many thanks for taking the time off your busy schedule to complete this questionnaire. This remains solely for academic purpose; and assurances of confidentiality will be respected. Please do contact me for further queries on 00233203568630 or email A.I.Ibrahim@warwick.ac.uk